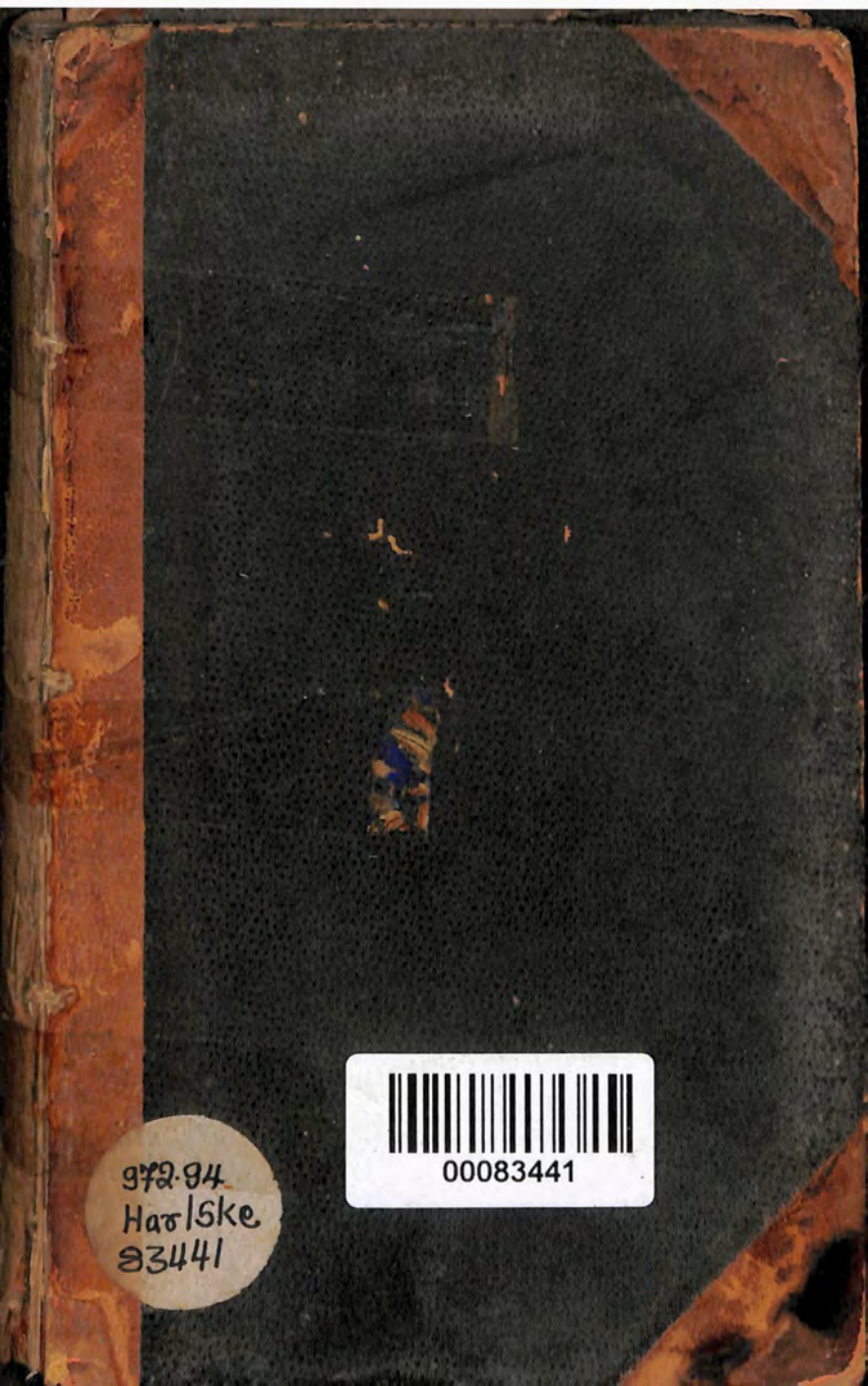
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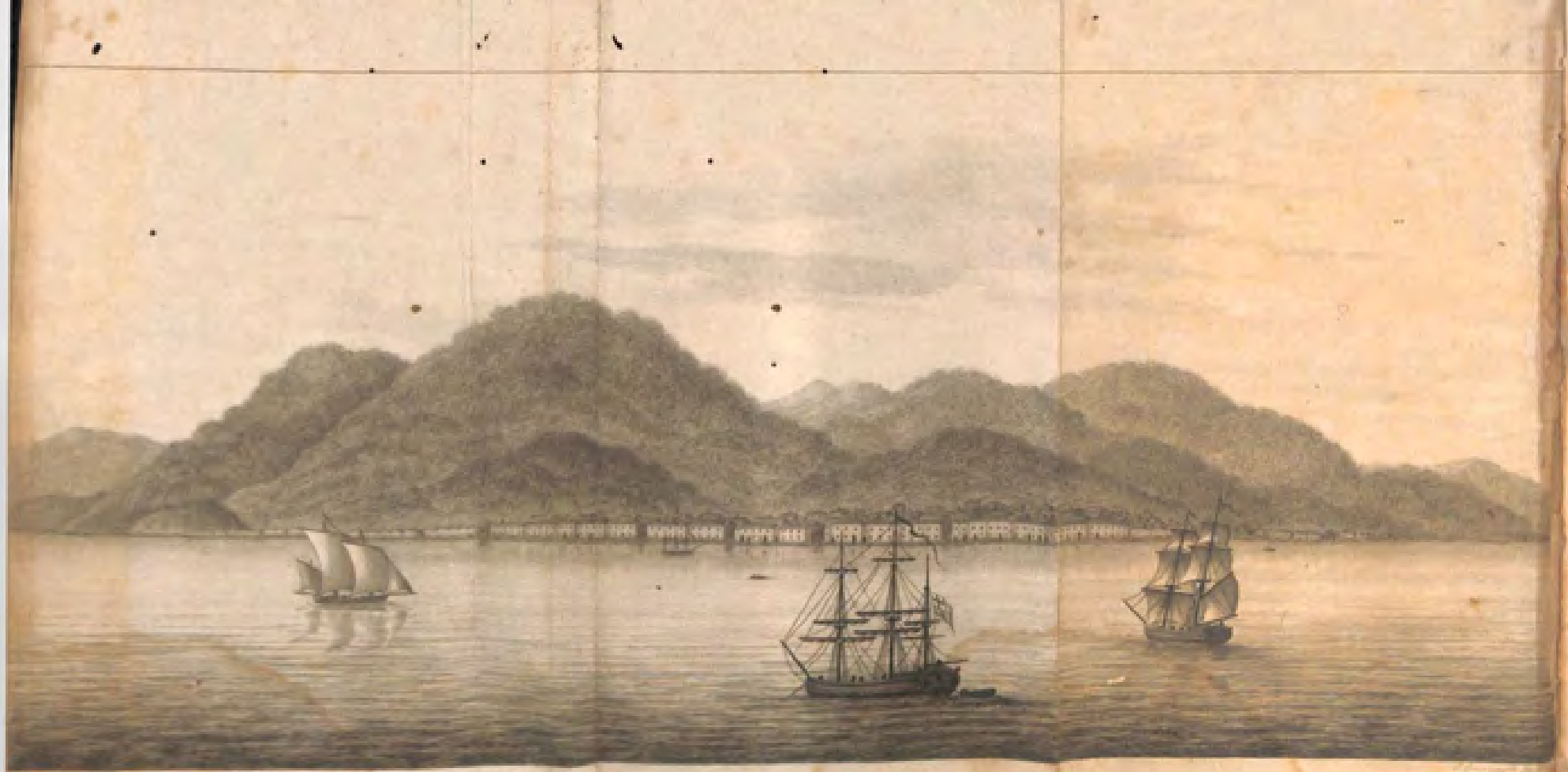

A VIEW OF CAPE FRANÇOIS, ST DOMINGO.

London, Pub.d by J.B. Lodge & Son, 355, Pall Mall, 1st May 1807

SKETCHES OF HAYTI;

FROM THE

EXPULSION OF THE FRENCH,

TO THE

DEATH OF CHRISTOPHE.

83441
a

BY W. W. HARVEY,
OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

Quod ego factum cuilibet veterum consulum gloriæ comparandum reor, nisi quod naturaliter audita visis laudamus libentius, et præsentia invidia, præterita veneratione prosequimur.—Vell. Paterc.

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PREFACE.

THE Island of Hayti has been long considered remarkable for the circumstances attending its discovery, the fertility of its soil, the beauty and grandeur of its scenery, and for the riches which it has, at different periods, poured into two of the greatest nations of Europe. But that which invests it with peculiar interest is the history of its inhabitants, every portion of which presents to our contemplation events deeply affecting in their nature, and instructive in their consequences. The aborigines, a harmless and inoffensive race, freely admitted the Spanish adventurers on their shores; and being equally simple and unsuspecting, treated them with perfect confidence and hospitality. But it is well known how short a time served to unfold to them both the character and designs of the strangers. Their kindness was rewarded with cruelty; their property was taken from them by violence; and the loss of

their liberty followed that of their possessions, and with it the power of resistance. Their oppressors were men actuated by avarice, superstition and cruelty, the most malignant of human passions; the gratification of which was neither restrained by conscience nor embittered by remorse. Their greedy desire after wealth prompted them to the perpetration of deeds, over which the honour and the decency of our nature would draw the veil of oblivion.

—Quid non mortalia pectora cogis,
Auri sacra fames!—

But thus it was that, by means as impious as they were inhuman and barbarous, the whole of the primitive race was at length so completely exterminated, as not to leave a vestige remaining.

To supply the loss of the aborigines of Hayti, thousands of negroes were, at different times, transported thither from Africa; and these unfortunate beings, after having been dragged from their native shores, and subjected, during a long and tedious passage, to untold sufferings, were reduced in their new abode under a system the most unjust and barbarous that cruelty has ever suggested, or ingenuity devised. But

injustice and oppression cannot always triumph; and that injured race, exasperated by the rigours of their bondage, at length rose in opposition to their masters, if indeed with feeble hope of deliverance, yet well resolved to struggle and to bleed for it. Hayti then became the scene of commotions as dreadful in their progress as the world has ever witnessed. Slavery itself could have exhibited nothing more truly shocking. The most horrid massacres were perpetrated without fear and without remorse; and while the planter and the slave contended, the one for subjugation and slavery, and the other for liberty and revenge, their blood often mingled together in the contest, flowing over every part of the colony.

But if any one period in the history of Hayti be calculated to awaken general interest more than another, it is undoubtedly that which has elapsed since its negro and coloured population have obtained their independence. It presents to us the picture of a people newly escaped from slavery, yet still suffering and exhibiting in their character, its pernicious and demoralizing effects; gradually returning from scenes of confusion and bloodshed, to habits of industry, peace and order; steadily aiming, amidst frequent reverses, to establish a regular and

independent government; and under circumstances of difficulty, with confined resources, labouring to improve their agriculture, to repair an exhausted population, to form commercial connexions, and to introduce a knowledge of the arts and sciences; thus laudably endeavouring to lay the foundation of an empire, which may perhaps be compared hereafter with nations the most celebrated for their civilization and refinement. To the period of those efforts the present volume relates; and for the satisfaction of those who may favour it with a perusal, it may be proper to state from what sources I have derived its materials, and by what motives I have been engaged to undertake its publication.

During the latter part of the reign of Christophe, I had occasion to visit Hayti, and to spend a considerable time at Cape François, the capital of his dominions. I had thus a favourable opportunity of observing the condition of the natives in general, of marking the peculiarities of their character, and of witnessing the plans which had been established with a view to their improvement. At that place resided the principal men in the Haytian government, both of the civil and military departments; and occasional interviews with

some, and frequent communications with others, enabled me to form a tolerably correct estimate of their talents, and to procure many important particulars respecting their country. Through my acquaintance with several European and American merchants, who had lived many years in different parts of the Island, I was furnished with accounts of such circumstances as had occurred during their residence there. And by my intimacy with those who had dwelt in Christophe's palace, as members of his household, or were in frequent attendance on him, in their official capacity, I obtained a knowledge of several facts relative to the character and proceedings of that chief. By personal observation therefore, and by frequent conversation with the natives and white residents, I procured considerable information respecting the Haytians, from the period of their emancipation up to the time of my arrival; and I was thus furnished with more satisfactory answers to such inquiries as naturally suggest themselves concerning a free and independent body of negroes, than could be collected from the occasional notices of their state which appeared in periodicals and gazettes, or from any history that has been written respecting them.

The materials of the volume are therefore principally derived from printed documents procured in Hayti, and from short notes made during my residence there. Lest however the reader should, after this statement, expect a more ample and detailed account of the Island than he will find on perusal, it may be necessary to explain more fully of what these materials consist. The communications of the more intelligent Haytians to which I have alluded, being confined to events which they had themselves witnessed, were necessarily imperfect and unconnected. The notes also of which I speak, were taken entirely for my private satisfaction, without the most distant intention of preparing them subsequently for publication. The jealousies and suspicions of Christophe, at the same time, rendered it necessary to be cautious in committing accounts to writing; and thus my memoranda have actually failed me in some particulars, on which I felt especially concerned to dwell at large. To supply so far as I have been able the deficiencies arising from these causes, I have, as will be seen by references in their proper places, occasionally consulted an anonymous work, entitled *History of the Island of St. Domingo, from its discovery*

by Columbus to the present period.[1] But I beg to state most distinctly, that I undertake to furnish nothing more than brief and imperfect Sketches of Hayti, since its emancipation, such as I hope may be found interesting to general readers.[2]

With respect to the motives by which I have been induced to submit these pages to the public eye, it may perhaps be sufficient to say that I conceived that any information, however imper-

[1] Published by A. Constable and Co. Edinburgh; and Rest Fenner, London, 1818.

[2] The plan of the work hardly admitted of chronological order; but lest any confusion should arise from the omission of dates, I have thought it proper to subjoin them in this place :—

Original revolts in Hayti commenced	23rd August	1791
British forces entered the Island	19th Sept.	1793
——— quitted it	June	1798
Independence of Hayti first proclaimed	1st July	1801
Expedition under the command of Le Clerc sailed	14th Dec.	1801
French finally expelled from the Island	2nd Dec.	1803
Independence of Hayti again formally proclaimed	1st Jan.	1804
Dessalines crowned Emperor of Hayti	8th Oct.	1804
Death of Dessalines	17th Oct.	1806
Christophe proclaimed President of Hayti	17th Feb.	1807
Christophe crowned King of Hayti	2nd June	1811
Death of Christophe	Oct.	1820

fect, respecting a people so interesting as the Haytians are become, would at this time prove peculiarly acceptable; and as I designed not their history since their emancipation, but merely brief notices of their condition during that period, I ventured to believe that the information in my possession was sufficiently full and correct to answer that purpose. I was the more inclined to this undertaking, by the circumstance, that with the exception of a short account in the anonymous history referred to above, nothing, so far as my inquiries have enabled me to learn, has been published in this country respecting them. But for these reasons, the *Sketches of Hayti* would never have seen the light.

That these prefatory statements be not unnecessarily prolonged, I will add but one remark, which is in reference to the introductory chapter. That chapter was originally intended to appear in a separate form, having been written for a purpose not directly connected with the general object of the book. Its design therefore, is not, as it will be readily seen, to give a minute description of the horrors which accompanied the early insurrections of the Haytians. It is still less its design to defend, or to extenuate, the excesses and cruelties they

practised, while contending for their liberty. Its principal object is to show, that the early commotions in Hayti may be principally attributed to the impolicy and injustice of the planters and colonists themselves; that the slave population, in endeavouring to recover their freedom, were guilty of no greater cruelties than those exercised towards them by their oppressors; and thus to obviate the erroneous opinion which ascribes exclusively to the negroes, those deeds of bloodshed and destruction that marked the contest.

Queen's College, Cambridge,
10th April 1827.

P. S. Since this sheet was sent to the press, I have procured a copy of the *Rural Code of Hayti*, which code was published at Port-au-Prince in May last, and has just been re-printed in this country. At present I have only to remark respecting it, that it contains many judicious regulations with regard to agriculture; and that there are others which appear to infringe on the liberty of the labouring classes of Haytians, the necessity and policy of which remain to be proved. But whatever change the code may produce, it can never warrant the assertion, which has been incautiously made, that the condition of those classes is again become, in all respects, similar to the condition of slaves.

ERRATA.

Page 21, line 11, for *posseested* read *possessed.*
40, — 4, for *six years* read *two years.*
102, — 13, for *tonjours* read *toujours.*
110, — 11, for *where* read *were.*
163, — 26, for *reprehensible* read *reprehensive.*
169, — 14, for *nor* read *and.*
173, two lines from the bottom, for *the same number of regiments,* read *three regiments.*

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SKETCHES OF HAYTI.

I.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE PRINCIPAL CIRCUMSTANCES CONNECTED WITH THE EMANCIPATION OF THE HAYTIANS.

THE circumstances connected with the deliverance of the negro population of St. Domingo from slavery, have been related with great exactness and impartiality. But at the present time, when the subject of general emancipation excites universal interest, it may be proper to review the principal transactions which led to so important an event; as by this means we shall be enabled to determine the causes, not only of the expulsion of the French from their richest and most extensive colony, but of the cruelties and barbarities which the Haytians are said to have perpetrated during their struggle for liberty and independence.

While the most violent measures were adopted in France to overthrow the established

government, the planters of St. Domingo did not look on in silence; and the National Assembly, in requiring a more equal representation of the people, tacitly acknowledged that the colonies ought to have a voice in the legislature, before the observance of its decrees could be justly enforced. The colonists themselves perceiving this, determined to seize the advantages which it offered. They selected their deputies, formed their colonial assemblies, and proceeded to establish a new constitution for the internal government of the island. This constitution, when published, sufficiently showed that nothing short of their independence of the mother country was the object at which they aimed. Among the motives which led them to form this resolution was the decree of the National Assembly, which declared that "all men are born and continue free and equal as to their rights." This declaration they interpreted as tacitly recommending the emancipation of their slaves;—and fearing the effects it might produce when known to the mulattoes and negroes, they considered it necessary, for the security of their privileges and property, to take the government of the colony into their own hands.

It is unnecessary to detail the commotions

which now commenced in the Island,—the opposition of the royalists and revolutionists to each others' plans,—the violent measures pursued by each party,—and the disgraceful transactions which followed. It is sufficient to observe, that they created the greatest ferment throughout the colony, in which all classes, the slaves not excepted, largely partook.

As early as the commencement of these contentions among the planters and the colonial government, a society had been formed in France denominated *Amis des Noirs*, composed chiefly of those who afterwards took a leading part in the French revolution,[1] and of the mulattoes who were at that time resident in the French capital. Their professed object was to effect the emancipation of the slaves; because, they said, they were assured that these unfortunate beings possessed a right to liberty as indisputable as their own. Whatever was their real design, their measures for its accomplishment were in many instances both injudicious and violent. They contended for *immediate* emancipation; forgetting, in the heat of their zeal, the unfit state of the negroes at this period to

[1] Gregoire, La Fayette, and Robespierre, were among its principal members.

value and improve the advantages of freedom; and thus overlooking the propriety and necessity of a gradual method of liberating them. They were equally rash in the manner in which they caused their designs in favour of the slaves to be communicated to them. Inflammatory addresses respecting their rights are said to have been dispersed among them, and various other means were adopted, in order to prevail on them to rise in their own defence.

One of the first steps of this society was, to recommend Ogée, a mulatto of St. Domingo, at that time at Paris, to return to the Island, with a view of making preparations for the execution of their intentions;—having previously procured him the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the army of one of the German electors. In the meantime, the mulattoes urged their claims, and demanded the full benefits and privileges of the whites. But the planters and the colonial assembly, fearing it would be dangerous, in the present state of their own affairs, to accede to this demand, endeavoured to evade it by promises of future benefits and privileges. Such was the state of things with regard to the planters, and the coloured population, when Ogée arrived in the Island.

The effects produced on the negroes by the

contentions among the French residents, the proceedings of the mulattoes, and the exertions of the *Amis des Noirs*, were such as might have been easily foreseen. And when they learnt from Ogée and his assistants, that steps were taking to effect their speedy emancipation; and were urged, by motives which few in their circumstances could have resisted, to exert themselves in their own behalf,—receiving at the same time promises of assistance and support; nothing was more natural than their determination to escape from the yoke under which they groaned, and to assert their right to liberty and independence.

The mulattoes, perceiving that, notwithstanding the decrees of the national assembly and the promises of the colonists, their privileges were still withheld, determined at length to secure them by force of arms;—the negroes also, having formed their plans, lost no time in commencing their operations; and both parties united in attacking their common oppressors, and in asserting and maintaining their common rights. Accommodation soon became impossible. The French would offer no terms, nor comply with the most just demands. The negroes had risen, bent on obtaining their freedom, and the mulattoes on

securing their privileges :—these were crimes, in the estimation of the colonists, never to be forgiven. Slavery or destruction was the demand of the planters: liberty or death the determination of the insurgents. The disregard of the former to all their claims,—the repeated refusal to grant them redress, or to allow their condition to be in any degree ameliorated,—with the violence of the measures pursued in order to subdue them, served only to render them more desperate and formidable. Neither their scanty resources on the one hand, nor the strong opposition which they met with on the other, could shake their resolution, or diminish their thirst for revenge. But animated by their numbers, and growing increasingly fierce by their ravages, an occasional defeat caused only a momentary check, before the flame broke forth in all its fury. Then it was, that St. Domingo became the scene of the most dreadful ravages, and of massacres as horrid as the world has ever witnessed.

Had the planters, in the commencement of these insurrections, adopted conciliatory measures ; had they listened to just complaints and reasonable demands, they would, in all probability, have softened down their destroyers, and have stopped the tide of human blood which now

flowed over every part of the colony. The revolters, it should be remembered, did not engage in this work of destruction because their liberty was granted, but because it was denied them. They did not murder the whites because the latter showed a disposition to lessen their toils and sufferings, and to render their condition less grievous and degrading; or because they held out to them the prospect of emancipation at a future period; but because they evinced a determination to retain them in a state of slavery, and to subject them to all its miseries.

While these commotions were at their height, the English, then at war with France, invaded St. Domingo. The French had now two enemies to oppose;—the regular and well-disciplined troops of the British army, and the revolted negroes. After several ineffectual attempts to withstand the former, the French commissioners, to whom the government of the Island had been entrusted, issued a proclamation of freedom, with a view to ensure the assistance of all the negroes. This, at the moment, was considered a dangerous experiment. It was without parallel in the history of slavery; and its effects on the negroes,

under existing circumstances, could not be determined with any degree of certainty. No longer in subjection to the laws of a degrading servitude, and collected together in one body, they might easily have fallen on those who, till this time, had shown themselves their greatest oppressors. But the revolters, as well as the other negroes, instantly joined the French forces, and united with them in endeavouring to expel what they considered a common foe. For the invaders, they concluded, came not to assist them in maintaining their rights, but to drive out the French, to claim the colony, and to endeavour, at least, to re-establish and perpetuate the system which was at this moment abolished.

During the ensuing contest, the French had no reason to lament the important step they had taken. Its history furnishes the most satisfactory proofs that to the exertions of the negroes, they were principally indebted for the expulsion of the English, and their continued possession of the Island: that, in short, had they been destitute of negro soldiers, they would have thought themselves fortunate in escaping with their lives, leaving their foes in quiet possession of their richest and most important colony. Many of their bravest and most skilful leaders

were selected from among them. The distinguished talents of *Touissaint L' Ouverture*, and the importance of his active and persevering efforts, are well known and have been duly appreciated. The zeal and bravery of *Christophe* placed him next in rank and influence to Toussaint. Both were negroes, and had been slaves; but now employed their talents, and risked their lives, in defending their late masters, with the utmost ardour and fidelity.

The struggle was long and doubtful; and the sufferings of both parties, from the loss of men, want of provisions, and the diseases incidental to the climate, were severe. The negroes endured their portion; and *that*, it should be remembered, for the men by whom they had been enslaved, and in order that they might retain the possession and government of the Island. Nor should it be forgotten, that the French were not in circumstances to command the assistance of the negroes; especially that of those who had become open revolters. They might have refused it without danger to themselves, and have abandoned the French to their fate. But throughout the contest, there was nothing that indicated a disposition to avenge themselves of their former sufferings; nothing that occurred among them contrary to the

firmest attachment to the cause of their late masters, and a zealous perseverance in opposing the enemy.

From the first arrival of the English, to the time of their quitting the Island, the relative state of the colony, with regard both to the French and the negroes, had undergone an important change. It remained in possession of France; but the manner in which it was to be governed, existing circumstances rendered totally different to any mode which had been previously pursued. The civil and military chief was not chosen from among the whites, as had been invariably the case hitherto, but was selected from among the negroes; and Touissaint L'Ouverture, on account of his distinguished talents and integrity, was raised to the most important and honourable station in the colony. Slavery being abolished, the blacks were placed on an equality with the whites. Many of the plantations remained in the hands of their original proprietors, and were to be cultivated, in future, by the labours, not of slaves, but of free men.

These were circumstances in which the negroes had never before been placed; and their character was, therefore, to undergo a further

trial. Having one of their own race at the head of affairs, trained by long service to military exercises, in possession of the instruments of war, and having nothing to oppose them but the broken remains of the French forces; how easily might they have shaken off all connexion with the mother-country, have asserted their complete independence, and destroyed those who should oppose them! There was no obstacle to their avenging themselves on their former oppressors, either by expelling them from the Island, or by cutting them off; nor to their abandoning the plantations to the ruin which the late war, with the preceding ravages, had already commenced.

These considerations readily presented themselves to the minds of the remaining planters; nor could they help entertaining a serious concern for their own safety, and for the peace and tranquillity of the colony. But the event showed that their fears were altogether destitute of foundation. The administration of Touissaint, for its ability, mildness, and integrity, they acknowledged, was beyond all praise. Considering the interests of France alone, the colony had never been in a more prosperous condition. The negroes gave every proof of industry, subordination and content.

They diligently cultivated the plantations, and received the wages of their labour. They submitted cheerfully to all those regulations which it was thought necessary to establish; and, living in possession of their freedom, were satisfied and happy. Those whose merits had raised them to stations of honour and responsibility, were as solicitous for the re-establishment of the French interests, as for the preservation of their own freedom. In short, the colony had seldom been more productive, the revenue which it afforded to the mother-country more abundant, the persons and property of the planters more secure, nor the negroes themselves more industrious and peaceful. In this manner things would have no doubt proceeded,—the natives improving in the arts of peace and civilization,—the produce of the Island yielding increased wealth both to the proprietors and to the cultivators,—till the distinctions of colour and the prejudices founded on them would have been forgotten;—and the whole state of things have presented a proof that whites and blacks may, in all respects, become equals, and regard each other as brethren,—had not the restless ambition of the usurper of France, and the discontent of the ex-colonists, disturbed the tranquillity

of the Island, and suddenly renewed those contests which, it was hoped, had for ever ceased.

During the short interval of peace between England and France in 1802, an expedition was fitted out by the government of the latter country, and sent to St. Domingo. Its professed design was to subdue those in the colony who, they would have it thought, were inimical to the authority of the mother-country: its real object was to reduce the negroes to slavery a second time. For this purpose an army, whose valour had been previously tried in Europe, was transported across the Atlantic, under the command of one of their most popular generals.[1] It was further intended that the negroes should be scattered over different parts of the colony, so as to prevent their collecting together in large bodies; and other arrangements having been made, slavery was to be again proclaimed. Than the injustice of this attempt nothing can be more glaring. Independent of the natural right of the negroes to liberty, their freedom had been declared by the French Commissioners, and recognized and confirmed by the French government. That government now attempted to enslave them again. Could it be for a moment expected that they would stand

[1] Le Clerc.

still, and allow these designs to be carried into execution, without making any resistance? They had felt the rigours of slavery, and had endured them too long to allow them ever to be forgotten. They were now in possession of their freedom, and were not to be suddenly deprived of it without making one effort in its defence.

Happily for the cause of liberty, before the French could make the necessary arrangements, the negro leaders, who from the first suspected their designs, discovered the real object of the expedition. Enraged at the injustice of those in whose honour they had hitherto placed the utmost confidence, they instantly flew to arms; and the negro soldiers with the cultivators, were once more compelled to unite in defending their rights, against the designs of men who had acknowledged their freedom, and solemnly sworn to be its protectors. The French, finding that nothing could be effected by stratagem, and that the plans on which they had confidently relied for success were defeated, now determined to subdue and enslave the objects of their oppression by force of arms; feeling assured that the negroes, though their superiors in number, could not long withstand the skill and bravery of their own troops.

Disappointed in this expectation also, and regarding the blacks as a species of brutes, they had immediate recourse to such methods of cruelty and death, as would be selected only for the purpose of exterminating a dangerous and destructive race of animals;—to barbarities worse than had ever before stained the annals of any people pretending to the character of civilization. All the male negroes and mulattoes they could lay their hands on, were murdered in the most shocking manner. Five hundred of these unfortunate beings were at one time shot near Cape François; and an equal number were, on another occasion, coolly massacred in view of the negro army. Thousands were carried on board the vessels in the harbour, and were either suffocated in the holds, or thrown overboard in chains and drowned. Even these methods failed to accomplish the horrid purposes of these blood-thirsty tyrants; till at length they had recourse to the dreadful expedient, of hunting and destroying the unhappy victims of their rage by blood-hounds. These animals, pursuing the negroes to the parts of the mountains inaccessible to their no less bloody employers, easily gained their retreats, and devoured all who were so unfortunate as to be discovered. Such of the black

prisoners as had evinced the greatest zeal and activity in defence of liberty, were selected from the rest; and on sundays, were dragged to a spot chosen for the purpose, and in sight of thousands of spectators, were thrown to these terrible animals, and torn to pieces. In short, the attempt was founded in injustice, commenced by treachery, and conducted in a manner the most inhuman and barbarous.

To the arms, the treachery, and the cruelty of the French, what had the negroes to oppose? By what means were a body of men in a great measure ignorant of all that was necessary to a successful enterprize, trained in the school of slavery, and knowing little except its rigours, frequently destitute of a sufficient number of leaders, and but ill-furnished with arms, to contend successfully with troops trained to every mode of warfare, and stimulated by a resolution to subdue, or to exterminate? But however hopeless their case for some time appeared, they determined on resistance as long as there should be any left capable of opposing their enemies. They first united in one body, and entered into a common vow either to expel their oppressors, or to die in the attempt. "La Liberté ou la mort," was their rallying cry; and though there appeared little or no prospect

of success, they ever felt animated by the conviction that they fought in the best of causes,—the cause of freedom and independence. Right and justice were on their side; they felt it so, and it rendered them unconquerable. In the early part of the contest, they were deprived by treachery of their ablest leader; but his loss served only to increase their rage, and consequently to render them more formidable. During this severe struggle, they displayed a degree of courage and firmness, with a patient endurance of privations and sufferings, far above their condition and character. At the same time, they sought and found opportunities of revenge; and the cruelties which they perpetrated were equal, in number and atrocity, to those committed by their oppressors. But it will be remembered that they were, in the first instance, compelled to take up arms in their defence, by the unjust designs of the French; and were then urged, by their subsequent barbarities, to avail themselves of every occasion and mode of retaliation. They fought for liberty; and if they found that the only way to secure it was through blood, it was an alternative to which their enemies had reduced them. Nor will those who have paid attention to the circumstances of the war, hesitate to consider the French as

chiefly chargeable with the horrors, cruelties, and massacres, of this sanguinary contest.

After a doubtful and desperate struggle, success crowned the exertions of the Haytians. They expelled their foes, secured their rights, and took possession of the Island, which their toils and sufferings had purchased. To what causes the failure of the French is to be attributed, it may not be difficult to determine. Scarcity of provisions, incessant and laborious duty, continual exposure to nightly dews, want of success,—all these co-operating with the baneful effects of a tropical climate, produced a contagious fever that carried off thousands of the army. In the course of the contest, Le Clerc fell a victim to this disease; and though defective in some of the most important qualifications of a general, there was not one among the surviving officers, properly fitted to succeed him. In the meantime, the negroes descending by night from the mountains, continually harrassed their troops, and often drove them from their post. Emboldened by these successes, as well as by the losses which the French experienced, from the disease which prevailed among their troops, they then ventured to commence the attack; and either through their own impetuosity and bravery, or through the ill-ma-

nagement of the French generals, they were frequently masters of the field. In this manner, the expedition, on which so much confidence had been placed, terminated, as it deserved, in the utmost disgrace; and the majority of the surviving planters and soldiers were glad to escape from the vengeance which they beheld ready to fall on them; and to quit for ever the Island which, but for their cruelty, avarice, and folly, they might have retained in their possession to this day.[1]

Such unquestionably were some of the principal causes of the failure of the French expedition, and the consequent loss of the colony. But whether they will fully account for an event so important in its results;—whether the success of the Haytians be not an indication that a superior power favoured their exertions, and enabled them to triumph;—whether, in a word, that power will not ultimately "avenge the cause of the oppressed, and put their enemies to flight,"—are questions deserving the serious consideration of those who are still the advocates of slavery;—nor can they, till they

[1] Additional particulars of this contest will be given in the account of Christophe's early life, which follows.

have decided these, and similar questions, reasonably defend a system so odious in itself, so baneful in its consequences, and so directly opposed to every principle of justice and humanity.

II.

LIFE, CHARACTER, AND REIGN OF DESSALINES.

After the successful contest of the Haytians for their liberty, the proceedings of Dessalines are the first objects presented to our notice; and a brief account of his character, and of the principle events of his career, will serve to furnish us with a clear and correct view of their condition, from the era of their emancipation up to the time of his death.

Dessalines may be considered the first ruler of a body of emancipated negroes, posseested of their independence; an office for which neither the circumstances of his early years, nor the opinion then entertained of his abilities, could have led him to hope. Of that part of his life previously to his joining in the first insurrections, little more is known than that he was a slave of the lowest order, his master being himself a negro; and that, while in this condition, he was remarkable chiefly for his strength and activity, for an unconquerable obstinacy, and a low sort of cunning not un-

usual among negroes. It is probable that he was induced to join in the early commotions, by the natural desire of freeing himself from that kind of bondage which, it appears, was considered, by the slaves of the planters, still more degrading than their own;—by a principle of ambition which even slavery, it has been found, cannot wholly destroy;—and by a restlessness of disposition, too powerful to be resisted, whenever an opportunity for its indulgence offered. Whatever were his motives, he soon became one of the most active in conducting their proceedings, one of the most daring in proposing and carrying into effect, schemes of the greatest hazard, and one of the most cruel and barbarous in his treatment of the planters and other whites who fell into their hands.

His activity, hardihood, and cruelty rendered him, in the estimation of the insurgents, worthy of holding a conspicuous place among them; nor was it long after the commencement of those ravages, to which their fury at this time drove them, that he appeared among the most distinguished of their leaders. He left no means untried in order to prevail on the negroes to abandon the service of their masters; and having collected a considerable number into one body, placed himself at their head, and

then caused them to lay waste the plantations, to destroy the mansions which had been erected on them, and to massacre their unprotected proprietors without distinction. Particular instances of his cruelty, during this period, may not, from the difficulty of establishing their truth, be confidently produced. But his subsequent proceedings tend to confirm the assertion, often made at Cape François respecting him, —that he was ever prepared to perpetrate deeds of the most atrocious and unprovoked barbarity.

After the declaration of freedom, by the French, Dessalines joined their forces in endeavouring to expel the English. He engaged in this contest with his accustomed activity and fierceness; and his exertions were considered as an atonement for his previous misconduct; so that, before the close of the war, he had risen to considerable rank among the negro soldiers. The service to which he was called, during this period, fitted him to act the firm and courageous part which he took, when the attempt was made to re-establish slavery. Although marked by the same cruelty, which had distinguished his early career, it must not be forgotten that the cause for which he fought was most just in itself, and most important to

those whose interests it involved; and that the designs of the French, together with their injustice and cruelty, naturally appeared, in the judgment of all the negro chiefs, to warrant the most barbarous measures they could adopt. Dessalines, in particular, turned a deaf ear to all the dictates of pity and humanity; and regarding the French as the relentless enemies of his race, bent on enslaving or annihilating them, he treated all who were so unfortunate as to fall into his hands, with excessive rigour and barbarity. At the same time, his attachment to the cause of freedom, the feats of valour which he achieved in its defence, the coolness with which he met danger, and the firmness of his resolution to conquer or die, were exceeded by none of the other intrepid negro leaders in this terrible and decisive contest.

Had the sole aim of Dessalines been the acquisition of power, he could not have been more successful. Previously to the seizure of Touissaint, he was second in command; and on the removal of that distinguished negro from the Island, he succeeded to his authority, as the commander-in-chief of all the black forces. For although deficient in military skill, his zeal, activity, and courage, supplied, in some

measure, what he wanted in this respect; and with his violent hatred of the French, rendered him the most popular of all the negro generals. Thus from the condition of a slave, he rose, in the course of a few years, to rank and distinction; till he at length found himself the chief of the negro population, in possession of a rich and extensive colony, and at the head of a people who, being effectually emancipated from slavery, were entering on the enjoyment of their freedom and independence.

On the expulsion of the French forces, a considerable number of residents remained at Cape François, and the other towns of the colony; some from a vain hope of securing at least a part of their property; and others compelled, against their wishes, to prolong their stay, from having lost the opportunity of returning to Europe with the remains of the army. Shortly after the entrance of Dessalines at the Cape, he invited these men to continue in the Island, and assured them that their persons and property should be protected as long as they felt disposed to remain. Partly from necessity, and partly from the hope of repairing the losses they had experienced, the majority accepted this unexpected offer.

But it soon appeared that Dessalines was as

destitute of veracity, as of forbearance or generosity; and if these unfortunate men, forgetting his character, placed any confidence in his assurances, a short time served to convince them how seriously they were mistaken. A few weeks only had elapsed, when he issued a proclamation of so inflammatory a nature, as astonished even his own officers, and suddenly deprived the French residents of every hope. "It is not enough," he says, "to have driven from our own country the barbarians who, for ages, have stained it with our blood.—It is become necessary to ensure, by a last act of national authority, the permanent empire of liberty in the country which has given us birth. —Those generals, who have conducted your struggles against tyranny, have not yet done. The French name still darkens our plains; every thing reminds us of the cruelties of that barbarous people.—What do I say? There still remain Frenchmen in our Island.—When shall we be tired of breathing the same air with them? What have we in common with that bloody-minded people?—Citizens! men, women, young and old, cast round your eyes on every part of the Island; seek there your wives, your husbands, your brothers, your sisters:—What did I say? seek your children

—your children at the breasts; what is become of them? Instead of those interesting victims, the affrighted eye sees only their assassins,—tigers still covered with their blood;—whose frightful presence upbraids you with your insensibility, and slowness to avenge them. Why then do you delay to appease their manes?"

Dessalines was not the man to rest in mere threats. His endeavours to arouse the people to further deeds of vengeance, was the method he adopted for declaring his own villanous intentions:—for villanous they unquestionably were; since whatever might have been the cruelties of the French, and however just the rage entertained against them as a nation, he was bound, by his engagements, to protect the remaining residents. Shortly after he issued the proclamation, he visited the towns in which they lived; and having secured them, either by fraud or force, caused his soldiers, contrary to his solemn pledges, to put them to the most violent death, and personally assisted in destroying them.

At Cape François his proceedings were marked by the basest treachery, and by modes of cruelty too shocking to describe. The scene it exhibited was more dreadful, if possible, than

any which even the severe struggle for emancipation had presented. With difficulty he prevailed on a party of the most ferocious of his troops to engage anew in this horrible service of blood and destruction; and having carefully marked the houses in which the helpless victims of his fury resided, as soon as the day was closed, he proceeded, at the head of his savage band, to execute his dreadful purposes. This was a night of horrors. The negroes themselves, accustomed as they had been to scenes of blood, shuddered at this renewal of massacres. The Americans, who had taken up a temporary residence at the Cape, sat in death-like silence in their houses, while they listened to the shrieks of the dying which issued from every quarter. Now were heard the bursting of doors, and the rush of the murderers:—now the cries and groans of these unfortunate victims of rage and cruelty:—an awful silence ensued: it was soon interrupted by a repetition of the signs of horror and death:—and the cold-blooded deeds of that night, hardly to be equalled in the annals of cruelty, left few to tell the dreadful fate of their countrymen.

The majority of the survivors were destined to experience a similar fate. Dessalines soon

ascertained that, notwithstanding the strictness of his orders and his search, several had escaped discovery. To these he now offered forgiveness and protection, provided they would publicly appear to receive his assurances. Many of them, hoping that some remains of sincerity might still exist in the heart of this savage; and knowing that at best, their lives were in continual danger, appeared on the appointed spot at the time specified. He was waiting their arrival, surrounded by the companions of his cruelty;—when, instead of the promised assurance of protection and safety, he caused them all to be shot.

Happily few are called to be the witnesses of such deeds;—few could summon up sufficient resolution to endure the sight. The simple relation of such transactions must excite our sympathy for the sufferers, and the utmost detestation towards the author of their fate. But those who have visited the spots on which these murders were perpetrated, who have had occasion to reside in the houses in which they took place, and have heard the account of them related by the natives, must necessarily feel a deeper impression of their horror; while they regard the character of the man who planned and conducted them, with a degree of abhor-

rence far beyond what others can possibly feel. —The great body of the negroes, however, were utterly averse to these proceedings. They had obtained their liberty, and as far as could be learnt, were satisfied; and had not the savage barbarity of their chief struck them with terror, they would not have hesitated to defend the objects of his rage, and to assist them in escaping out of his hands. Some of his officers also, besides refusing him their assistance, are said to have expostulated with him on his injustice and cruelty; and to have entreated him, for the sake of his own honour, to abstain from further violence. If such were really the case, the guilt and infamy of these massacres must fall on Dessalines alone.

He now proceeded to take such steps as appeared to him necessary for the permanent establishment of his authority; and his first question was, not what should be done to promote the improvement and prosperity of his people, but what title, in his present exalted station, it would be most suitable for him to adopt. That of *Governor* of the Haytians he rejected, as indicating a degree of power more limited than that which he actually possessed. He determined therefore to assume the title of *Emperor;* and on declaring his inten-

tion, with little previous consultation, either with his officers or the people, he was hailed as such by the army, and conducted by them to the house which now became his palace, amidst their applauses and apparent good wishes for a long and prosperous reign.

In selecting this title, he consulted his vanity alone. The mere name could tend neither to increase his power, nor to confirm what he already possessed; and with the less imposing title of chief, he would have been equally respected, and equally powerful. Vanity indeed is a fault not confined to negroes; but it is seldom displayed in a manner so bordering on the ridiculous. For what can be more absurd than an uneducated, barbarous, though indeed successful negro, having authority over negroes as ignorant and as uncivilized as himself, and possessing but a part of a comparatively small Island, claiming the title of Emperor!

To men possessed of more prudence and penetration than Dessalines it would have appeared a matter of no inconsiderable difficulty to fix on a mode of government properly adapted to the state of negroes lately delivered from slavery. They had all fought bravely for their liberty, and had been successful. And should they not now be permitted to enjoy it in its full extent?

On the other hand, from their character, partly formed under the influence of the slave-system; and partly by the circumstances in which they had been placed during their struggle for freedom, they were yet unprepared to value and improve its advantages. Perfect liberty, such as they considered it, might in the course of a short time, be the means of rendering them perfect savages. Should they be permitted to act in all respects according to their own wishes and inclinations, (for this, it appears, was now their idea of liberty,) what could prevent the failure of every plan which might be adopted for their improvement? If, on the other hand, any disagreeable restraints, however necessary, should be imposed on them, it would probably be the occasion of general discontent, and might lead to more unhappy consequences.

These considerations, however obvious, do not appear to have occurred to the mind of Dessalines; or if they did occur, were allowed to have no weight. He was chiefly anxious for the establishment of the authority which he had been so successful in acquiring; and the mode of government which he selected was such as he thought best calculated for this purpose. The prerogatives to which he laid claim were fully secured; but the rights and privileges of

the people remained undefined,—perhaps at the time of forming the government, unconsidered. Its declared principle was, indeed, that all should be free; by which was simply meant that slavery should not be permitted. Laws were also enacted, and numerous regulations proposed, for the improvement of the rising state; but the emperor was allowed to possess unlimited power, and the right of using it in whatever manner he might think proper. He was empowered "to make, seal, and promulgate laws; to appoint and remove at his pleasure all public functionaries; to direct the receipt and expenditure of the state, together with the coinage; to make peace or war; to form treaties; to distribute at pleasure the armed force; and to have the sole power of absolving criminals, or commuting their punishment."[1] These prerogatives Dessalines claimed as his right; and it may be easily conceived in what manner, and for what purposes, he employed them.

From the time of his being proclaimed emperor, he manifested great solicitude for the improvement of his army; for he saw that not only the security of the Island, but his own safety also, depended greatly on the character and

[1] History of St. Domingo, p. 322.

discipline of his soldiers. He therefore thought it necessary to habituate them to military exercises, that they might be better prepared to defend his cause in case of rebellion, and the Island against a foreign foe. But the discipline, if it may be called such, which he established, was intolerably rigorous, corresponding with his general character. His officers, some of whom were superior to, though less successful, because less barbarous, than himself, he treated with excessive severity; sometimes offering them the most unprovoked insults; at others, degrading them for the most trivial offences; and, in some cases, subjecting them to corporeal punishment.

But the private soldiers felt the effects of his savage disposition still more severely. He neglected to furnish them with proper clothing, and convenient dwellings; so that it would hardly have been thought by a stranger, that the ragged and dispirited troops that now formed his army, were the men who had lately fought so successfully in defence of their liberty. At the same time, they were neither rewarded for their past exertions, nor even allowed to enjoy the rights which they hoped had been effectually secured. They were also exposed to the severest punishments for the slightest

breach of duty; and the service required of them, if less arduous than that which they performed during the late contest with the French, was not less constant nor less fatiguing. Dessalines evinced in this, as well as in many other instances, his ignorance of the negro character, and of his own interests; and an utter disregard to the rights and happiness of the men on whom he depended for his safety. They, in consequence, soon began to regard their chief as their oppressor, and their actual freedom an object still to be obtained.

In the meantime, his employments were as trivial and absurd, as his treatment of the people was impolitic and tyrannical. Nor would they be deserving notice, were it not that they were the occupations of a self-named emperor, and serve to exhibit his character more perfectly. Passionately fond of amusement, and ignorant of the real dignity of his title, he indulged himself in the most trifling sports, and appeared most happy, and most disposed to be generous, when engaged in them. He was even delighted when, assuming some comic character, he endeavoured to represent it before his officers and the people. He was especially anxious to be considered an elegant and accomplished dancer; and would sometimes thus exhibit him-

self in public, and call on the spectators for their testimony to his abilities. On these occasions, he considered the applause of the multitude, a certain proof of his successful performance, and a sufficient reward for the exhibition of his skill.

It is obvious how little qualified such a character was to direct the affairs of a newly emancipated colony. Narrow in his views, tyrannical in his measures, and absurd in his conduct, he appeared altogether unfit for the important duties of his situation. Although from the tranquillity which now prevailed, there was the most favourable opportunity for organizing a constitution adapted to the condition of his people; he was either too stupid, and therefore could not,—or too anxious for his own authority, and therefore would not, make the attempt. He appeared to think that if the French could be effectually prevented from gaining a footing in the Island, all was done that was necessary for its safety and prosperity. In short, after his coronation, his proceedings presented one continued scene of folly and tyranny.

Subject to the authority of such a chief, it may be thought that the Haytians had benefitted little by their emancipation; and that if they

had studied their interests, instead of attempting to obtain their freedom, they should have clung more closely to their chains. But this conclusion must not be too hastily drawn. Their present sufferings partly arose from the condition in which their liberty found them, and the circumstances under which it was obtained. Had they been emancipated in the same gradual manner, in which the British government proposes to liberate the slaves of the West India colonies, their condition would unquestionably have been superior to that in which they now stood. Under such circumstances, it is not probable, that a negro, possessing the brutality and savage fierceness of Dessalines, would have been found among them: it is less probable that one of his character should have succeeded in obtaining the power which he exercised: and still less, that in case he did so, he would have been long permitted to retain it.

Neither can it be admitted that the negroes of St. Domingo had hitherto derived no advantages from their emancipation. With all the tyranny of their chief, their liberty, and therefore their actual enjoyments, were greater than any system of slavery can admit. Though subject to his caprices and cruelties, they were acknowledged to be free citizens, and possessed

in consequence many advantages unknown to the slave. At the same time, the tyranny of an individual could not last long; and it would be at all times less difficult for the Haytians to effect the overthrow of a single tyrant, whatever his resources or his power, than to escape from the rigours and degradation of the slave-system, when the military force of a powerful nation was employed in supporting it. Nor should it be forgotten that at so early a stage of their independence, it would be unreasonable to expect from them a form of government possessing the regularity, mildness, and stability, of the governments of civilized countries; that the severity of Dessalines might, on the whole, be more advantageous in their present circumstances, than the unbounded liberty which they desired; that it was not likely another chief equally cruel and despotic would be his successor; that, in a word, tyranny would find among them its own remedy; but that laxity would lead to every species of licentiousness,—perhaps ultimately to utter barbarity.

These considerations, however, furnish no excuse for the tyranny exercised by this chief. His ignorance may be pitied, as arising from the disadvantages of his original condition; his love of power may be considered as a fault that

attaches to men of otherwise great and exalted character; but his cruelty towards those of his own race, who had contributed to his success admits of no extenuation. The authority he possessed should have been exercised in promoting their happiness, not in effecting his own ambitious and despotic purposes. For his own sake, he ought never to have forgotten that his people could not long suffer his tyranny. But he was alike insensible to all the considerations of prudence, gratitude, and humanity. His vanity blinded him to his faults, and his success rendered him insufferably arrogant and despotic.

At length, his principal officers, convinced of his inability, disgusted at his follies, and wearied with his cruelties, resolved on cutting him off, and electing another chief in his stead. The manner of his death has been differently related. By some it has been said that he was privately murdered: by others, that a soldier employed by the officers engaged in the plot, riding near him while he was reviewing a part of the army, aimed at him without his perceiving it, and shot him. Which of these accounts be the correct one it is of no importance to determine; but so universally was he hated by the people, and so violent were their detesta-

tion of his character, and their aversion to his government, that his death was the cause of general rejoicing.

His reign lasted six years; and it is matter of surprise that it lasted so long. But the army and the people at first felt flattered at the idea of having one of their own race placed at their head as their emperor; and when they afterwards experienced the unhappy effects of his tyranny, this tyranny for awhile seemed to have awed them into submission. But there were among his officers men of colour, who from their education and enlightened views, must, from the beginning, have secretly, if not openly, condemned his proceedings, and despised his pretensions. For what reasons they submitted to him so long, it is difficult to say; unless they hoped that his own conduct would hasten his downfall, with greater effect and safety than any direct opposition they could offer.[1]

[1] An Haytian writer thus expresses himself respecting this chief:—"With the will and the power to do good, the emperor Dessalines had not the knowledge, wisdom, and prudence indispensably necessary to sovereigns, in the management of public affairs. He was also unfortunately surrounded by a party of factious, intriguing and corrupt men; who, incapable of thinking justly, or benefiting their country, deceived and led him astray.—Hence, instead of attention being

It must be granted that no leader among the negroes displayed greater zeal in the contest for liberty, nor evinced on any occasion greater contempt of danger, than Dessalines. With equal truth, it may be added, that his cold-blooded barbarity towards his enemies, and

paid to the numerous and pressing wants of the state, its resources were lavished away in useless profusion. Not a single institution was established for the good of the people. Disorder prevailed in the administration of the government, and corruption spread among the troops."

A French politician having asserted, what indeed was the prevailing opinion, that Christophe was engaged in the plot against Dessalines, the same author thus answers the charge: —"The honour and probity which form the basis of our sovereign's character, and of his private and public conduct, render him incapable of such an infamous action. He mourned over the errors of the emperor, and the evils which threatened the country. But he would have preferred exile, and death itself, rather than have joined in an attempt against his person. And would to God," he adds, "that the emperor had listened to the sage councils of his majesty (Christophe), and his other friends;—that he had followed their advice,—reformed the dissolute manners of his court,—established order, morality, and justice,—and driven from his presence, those vile courtiers who knew only to flatter and deceive him; and who, though prompt and fearless in advising, and in doing evil, had the cowardice to abandon him in the hour of danger! From what sufferings, what horrors, what calamities, would he have then saved his country."—*De Vastey, Reflexions politiques.*

his excessive rigour towards those of his subjects who hesitated to obey his commands, have been seldom, if ever, surpassed. Perhaps his courage may be considered, not as the calm, undaunted resolution of a brave spirit, but rather a species of thoughtless, daring hardihood, caused by the desperate circumstances into which he was frequently thrown. His success in arms he owed more to the disadvantages of his opponents, than to his own military skill. But his ferocious barbarity was a native principle, cherished from his youth, strengthened by the innumerable acts of brutal violence and cruelty which he had witnessed, sanctioned, and personally perpetrated; till becoming at length ungovernable, it hurried him on to the repetition of those deeds which ended in his own destruction. It was permitted that his talents, such as they were, should be employed in promoting the emancipation of the Haytians; but it required also that his barbarity towards them, as well as towards the French, should receive its deserved punishment; and it was as much an act of policy, in order to secure the permanent establishment of their liberty, as of justice, to avenge their wrongs, to rid themselves, by some decisive stroke, of this monster of cruelty. His praise, (for what he merited

must not be withheld) was that he fought daringly in defence of liberty: his good fortune, that he rose to rank and power: his disgrace, that he used both for the most cruel and despotic purposes: and his end, the common and deserved fate of all tyrants.

III.

THE EARLY LIFE, AND CHARACTER, OF CHRISTOPHE.

PART I.

THERE are two reasons for giving at length, the particulars which are known of this celebrated negro: the first is, that notwithstanding the conspicuous part which he acted in the cause of emancipation, and the benefit it derived from his talents and exertions, nothing has been published respecting him, but accounts too imperfect to furnish even an outline of the circumstances of his life, and expressed in terms too general to convey a definite or correct idea of his character. The second is, that these brief accounts have been given either by the party who, when he rose to power, became his opposers and enemies; or by others who appeared too favourably disposed to his cause, to speak with impartiality of his proceedings.

According to an official document, published by his own order, he was born October 6, 1767;

but respecting the place and circumstances of his birth, different accounts have been given. By some it has been said that he was a native of St. Domingo, his father having been conveyed thither from Africa and sold as a slave: by others, that he was born in St. Christophers, from which Island he took his name: and another account states that his birth place was Grenada, which he quitted for St. Domingo in the year 1791. It has been further asserted that at his birth, his father was a free negro, and consequently the son was free:—and on the other hand it has been affirmed, that the first years of his life were spent in the degrading condition of slavery.

It would seem impossible to reconcile statements so directly at variance with each other; nor can it be considered necessary. For although the important station to which he was raised during the latter years of his life, naturally excites our curiosity respecting his origin, it cannot be thought a matter of much consequence, if it remain enveloped in uncertainty. It may, however, be observed, that the first of the preceeding statements is justly considered the least probable; for it is altogether unknown, and at any period of his life it would have been difficult to determine, the condition

of his father. The mere resemblance of names, is the only reason assigned for supposing him to have been a native of St. Christophers; while the imperfect manner in which he spoke the English language, sufficiently shows that such a supposition is groundless. That he was originally a slave in Grenada, and in the early part of his life was brought to St. Domingo, is by far the most probable, and therefore the most generally received, account. In short, whichever was the place of his birth, the intimations respecting himself, contained in the proclamations and manifestos which he caused to be published, together with the testimony of all the Haytians with whom I conversed on the subject, render it in the highest degree certain that slavery was his original condition.

Christophe therefore knew by experience the manifold evils of this inhuman system; and previously to his becoming one of its most strenuous opposers, he had submitted to its privations, undergone its rigours, and felt the demoralizing effects which it produces on the character. If the French planters themselves were not guilty of any excessive cruelties towards their slaves, neither were they distinguished for their clemency or kindness. And the men appointed by them to superintend the

labour of the negroes, and to watch over their conduct, often inflicted on these unfortunate beings the severest punishments for the most trivial offences, without any regard to the claims of justice, the dictates of humanity, or even to the interest of their employers. Hence he who was destined to become the ruler of his race, was often compelled to submit to the hard-heartedness and cruelty of an inhuman slave-driver.

Of all the privations which Christophe suffered during this period, there was none which he more deeply felt and lamented in the subsequent part of his life, than his want of education. It has sometimes occurred that a slave-holder, from some favourable disposition towards a negro, and on account of his faithful services, has bestowed on him together with his freedom, the advantages of elementary education. Christophe had not this good fortune. He was not instructed even in the rudiments of knowledge. When raised to the rank of a general over the black forces, he learned to write his surname; and when afterwards he became one of the chiefs of the Island, and assumed the title of king, he learnt to sign his christian name also. More than this he never acquired. The manner in which he was

engaged after he obtained his freedom, his occupations during the last struggle with the French, the critical situation in which he stood for some years after he was declared chief of the northern districts of the Island, and finally the splendour of royalty which he at length assumed, were sufficient to prevent his attempting to acquire that knowledge which, in his station, would have so materially served him.

The early years of a slave are not likely to furnish many incidents for the historian or biographer; nor have any particulars been preserved of the life of Christophe, during the period of his bondage. Whether he gave any proofs of the skill and courage for which he was afterwards distinguished; or whether he performed his daily task, unnoticed among his fellow-sufferers, is altogether uncertain. The latter is most probable: for slavery is a condition in which it is impossible to achieve any thing great in its design, or remarkable in its execution. It is the chief cause of that apparent deficiency in intellect and sensibility which its advocates affirm to exist among negroes, and on which they endeavour to found an argument for its support. But for the emancipation of Hayti, the name of Christophe would never have been known, nor his talents have

been called into exercise; but in the employments of his life, and the circumstances of his death, he would have been literally "as the beasts which perish."

The insurrections among the negroes commenced shortly after Christophe's arrival in the Island: and when he learnt that they sought to redress their grievances, and to secure their rights; that their object was to determine whether they should be liberated from their chains, or be held in a cruel and perpetual bondage, he felt it impossible to remain a silent and inactive spectator. He immediately joined their forces, and took an active part in their proceedings; and by his superior skill, and undaunted courage, he soon became one of their most useful and distinguished leaders. Nor is there any reason to believe that he refrained from those acts of cruelty and blood-shed, which marked the progress of their endeavours. For although some of the less savage and exasperated of the negroes refused to join their companions in their more outrageous and barbarous conduct, the ungovernable nature of his temper, united to that sense of wrong and oppression which rouses the most inactive to resistance, must have easily over-

come his scruples, silenced, for a time, the dictates of humanity, and have rendered him their willing and zealous associate.

A circumstance which he once related to an English gentleman, and which occurred during this period, may serve to throw light on his character, and on the nature of his proceedings. At a moment when the French forces employed in quelling the insurrection, were gaining considerable advantages over the negroes in the interior of the Island, and had so completely surrounded them on every side, that it appeared impossible for them to make any resistance, or to move to a more advantageous position, it was thought necessary, in order to divert the attention of the French, to send a small party of the most brave and courageous of the negroes, to make an attack on Cape François. Christophe was selected as the leader of this band; and as their object was chiefly to create such an alarm as would cause a part of the French troops to be called from the interior, he commenced his march with but a slender provision of arms and ammunition.

The most difficult and hazardous part of this undertaking was that of gaining a height near the town, where he might carry on his plans

without difficulty or danger. Unable, from the continual watch of the French, to take the accustomed route, the party was compelled to climb over mountains, and to penetrate woods and thickets, impassable to any but themselves. But though they had been accustomed to similar obstacles, the difficulties of the march, together with want of provisions, had, at length, a disheartening effect. They began to fear that the accomplishment of their object was impossible; and that they must inevitably fall into the enemy's hands; so that it required all the ingenuity and firmness of Christophe to raise their drooping spirits, and to prevail on them to persevere.

Thus encouraged, they at length succeeded in gaining the top of a mountain which overlooks the Cape, where they were perfectly concealed from the view of the inhabitants below. The day was far advanced before they could commence their operations; and Christophe, having divided the detachment into three small parties, and stationing them at short distances from each other, with a view to deceive the French respecting their numbers, prepared to give the alarm.

Though unseen themselves, they could witness every thing that was transacting in the

town. All was peaceable and tranquil; no apprehension of an approach by any of the insurgents appeared to exist: and the Governor, whose house was situated on elevated ground, was walking before it, in company with the commanding officer of the garrison, enjoying the cooling breeze of the evening. It was at this moment that Christophe, directing his field-piece towards the spot, fired: the musquetry from other parts of the mountain succeeded:—in an instant all was consternation and uproar:—the governor stood panic-struck,—concluding that no force would attack the place that was not well prepared to proceed: the inhabitants were seen running in every direction; alarm and terror were depicted in every countenance; and the fear that the town must be taken, and the inhabitants be indiscriminately massacred, soon became universal. Even the garrison, hastily concluding that it was impossible to withstand the enemy, at first made no preparation for resistance. The mountain they knew to be inaccessible by them; and what force had collected, it was impossible to ascertain. As long as day-light remained, Christophe kept up a continual fire, and occasionally directing a party to descend towards the town, increased the terror which had been already excited.

Dispatches were instantly carried to the French commander in the interior, to apprize him of the supposed danger, and to urge him to send a powerful reinforcement without delay. From the strong terms in which this communication was conveyed, he was induced to send a considerable number of the most valiant of his troops to the Cape; and by the time they had reached that place, Christophe, having heard of this movement, had returned to the main body of the negroes. The enemy's forces being, by this means, considerably diminished, the blacks escaped the dangers which threatened them, and took possession of a spot which afforded them the greatest advantages.—Thus from the skill with which Christophe carried this scheme into execution, as well as from the cowardice and precipitation of the governor and the garrison, he succeeded most completely in the accomplishment of his original object.

We have seen that during a period of five years, the English, then at war with France, endeavoured to gain possession of St. Domingo; and that the French Commissioners, finding they were ill-prepared to cope with the British troops, who invaded the Island

for this purpose, endeavoured to prevail on the negroes to unite with their own forces, by a proclamation of immediate freedom. A considerable number refused to give any assistance, and retiring to the mountains, preferred a life of wild adventure, to the difficulties and hardships of war: but the greater part united with the French, among whom was Christophe. He felt that he had sufficient motives to induce him to take this part. The unexpected proclamation of freedom to the negroes on the part of the French; the probability that should the English succeed in accomplishing their object, they would re-establish a severe and permanent system of slavery, together with the delight which, from the beginning of his career, he appeared to take in war, proved sufficient to determine him in this choice; and whatever might be his subsequent opinion of the English nation, he regarded the invaders as the common foe of the French and the negroes.

Whatever cause he might at any time espouse, the impetuosity of his temper was always sufficient to urge him to make the most strenuous exertions in its defence; and when he felt that justice was on his side, and feared that his liberty was in danger, as

he conceived to be the case in the present instance, his ardour became unconquerable, and his zeal, such as no discouragement could abate. He, therefore, acted with the greatest bravery throughout the whole of this contest. It was, in fact, a favourable opportunity for the display of those talents which had hitherto lain dormant; and became the means of drawing them forth into vigorous and successful action. The officers of the French forces, however skilful and brave, were unaccustomed to the mode of warfare to which they were frequently obliged to resort; and from the destructive effects of the climate on European constitutions, were incapable of enduring the privations and fatigues to which it frequently subjected them. A sagacious, active, and courageous negro was, on this account, no small acquisition; and as every man of this character was instantly promoted, the abilities of Christophe could not remain useless for want of opportunities to exert them. Such opportunities were now more frequent, from the state of the enemy; who, suffering from repeated defeats, and from the sickness that often prevailed among their troops, being sometimes in want of stores, and occasionally embarrassed by the inadequacy of their numbers, were continually

compelled to vary their methods of attack and defence.

It was in this war, therefore, that Christophe first distinguished himself. While in the ranks, he has been represented as intrepid and obedient. He felt conscious of his powers, and aspired to distinction. He was soon promoted to the rank of subaltern among the negro troops; he speedily attracted the notice, and received the favour, of his superiors; and he was, at length, numbered among those, in whose ability and integrity the utmost confidence might be safely placed, and who promised to be men of importance and eminence, whatever might be the ultimate fate of the colony.

It has been said by some, that during a part of the peaceful interval which succeeded the expulsion of the English, Christophe was employed in the capacity of a waiter at a coffee-house at Cape François. The inaccuracy of this statement is sufficiently evident from his recent promotion in the negro army, and the estimation in which his talents and exertions were held; and it probably originated with the party who, in their envy of his subsequent success, became strongly opposed to his pretensions, and sought every opportunity of circulating reports that

would in any degree tend to lessen his credit, or weaken his influence. The consideration of Christophe's character alone, would render their account in the highest degree improbable. For although a situation of this nature may be thought superior to his original condition, he would now consider it far too servile for one who had already acquired considerable distinction and honour; and rather than have submitted to this degradation, he would have preferred abandoning all his prospects of future renown, and have instantly joined the wandering parties in the mountains.

He was not, however, reduced to this necessity; for during the whole period of Toussaint's administration, he was variously and honourably engaged. Sometimes he was employed in giving directions and assistance respecting the estates which had suffered least from the ravages of the late war, and which therefore might be most readily prepared for cultivation; and at other times was assigned to him the duty of superintending the repair of those towns on the coast which had been partly demolished, but which were most convenient for the purposes of commerce, and most important as it regarded the protection of the Island. A considerable portion of his time

was also occupied in regulating and exercising the black troops placed under his command, and in training them for future service;—a task which, although not a regularly bred soldier himself, he was nevertheless well qualified to perform. In addition to these engagements, he was often employed, in conjunction with other officers, in causing such defences to be erected on different parts of the coast, as were deemed necessary for the future security of the colony. Nor was this all. So high was the opinion entertained of his abilities, that he was even permitted to take part in the proceedings of the colonial assembly; and at several of its sittings, he addressed its members with such fluency and propriety of language, and displayed in his speeches so much penetration and judgment, as to induce them to regard him as equally qualified for the senate and the field.

This was the most favourable, and perhaps the happiest, period in Christophe's life. From associating with European officers and merchants, the majority of whom were men of education, and some of them persons of rank, he could not fail to derive numerous and important advantages. The most natural effect of this open and frequent intercourse with men

from whose society he had been hitherto excluded, was an improvement in his disposition and conduct. He learnt to moderate the impetuosity of his temper, became agreeable and even polished in his manners, and at the same time acquired a degree of information on subjects of general interest which, however imperfect, proved highly advantageous in the subsequent periods of his career.

Above all, this interval afforded him favourable opportunities for extending his knowledge of political subjects; and thus it happened that in this instance at least, he was enabled, in some degree to repair the disadvantages he experienced from the want of an early education. The colony was now in a state of tranquillity, and the French residents, especially the army officers, possessing much leisure, frequently met to discuss republican principles, which were the popular topics of the day; and in private companies, as well as in places of general resort, introduced them as the leading subjects of conversation. A few only among them remained attached to the ancient system, or ventured to question the utility of the changes which the government of the mother-country had recently undergone; but they supported their opinions with great warmth

of feeling, and by every argument which their reading could furnish, or their earliest prejudices could suggest. The republican party, who were by far the most numerous, contended for the rights of men, pointed out what they deemed the defects and abuses of monarchies, and explained what, in their view, were the peculiar advantages of democratical governments, with all the eagerness and vehemence with which French republicans were accustomed to converse on political subjects.

In the course of these discussions, Christophe had frequent opportunities of hearing the principal arguments on each side of the question; and from the peculiarity of his genius, his past success, and the hopes which his ambition inspired, together with the circumstances of the times, he had become too solicitous to gain an acquaintance with subjects of this nature, to allow these opportunities to escape unimproved. He listened to the disputants with the utmost attention; and being endowed by nature with a ready apprehension and a penetrating judgment, he soon grew familiar with their leading arguments, learnt to form his own opinion of the points at issue, and occasionally joined in the dispute.

Imperfect as this method of acquiring in-

formation may appear, especially on questions of a political nature, it served to instruct him more correctly in the knowledge of his own rights, and in the nature and advantages of civil government; and, at the same time, it furnished him with arguments calculated to settle his opinions on the subject of personal freedom, and to confirm the resolution which those opinions had inspired. Of all other means of procuring information on subjects in which he felt his own interest involved, in common with that of his brethren, he was wholly destitute; but from the few sources of intelligence which he possessed, he knew well how to derive the utmost advantage; and thus in the scantiness of his means were more distinctly displayed the depth of his wisdom, and the extent of his abilities. In short, the benefits which he derived, during this period, from his intercourse with men of larger attainments, were conspicuous throughout the whole course of his life; and while his general conduct established the high opinion which had been already formed of his talents, his advancement to posts of greater honour and responsibility was more rapid than even his ambition had led him to anticipate.

III.

THE EARLY LIFE AND CHARACTER OF CHRISTOPHE.

PART II.

We have now to contemplate Christophe in an important, critical, and, to him, an untried situation. On the arrival of the expedition from France, under the command of General Le Clerc, for the purpose of subduing and enslaving the negroes, he was commander-in-chief of the black forces stationed at Cape François. He therefore was the first to act at this important moment; and the suspicions he entertained of the designs of the French government, induced him to proceed with the utmost caution and firmness. For what could be its object in sending to the Island such a numerous and powerful army? Was it for the purpose of defending it from invasion? For this it could not be necessary; since England was now at peace with France, and there was nothing to be dreaded from any other power. Was it to subdue those who were thought to be opposed

to the authority of the mother-country, and were only waiting an opportunity to declare their independence? If there were any who entertained sentiments of this nature, they could be but few; and the native and European forces already in the Island, were well able to keep them in awe. Was an attempt to be made to deprive the black population of their liberty, and to restore that system of injustice, tyranny, and oppression which had been happily abolished? It was thus that Christophe reasoned, till he arrived at the conclusion that for no other object than that of re-establishing slavery, could so formidable an expedition be designed.

He therefore immediately dispatched a messenger to Toussaint L'Ouverture, who was then in the interior of the Island, to inform him of its arrival, to communicate his opinion of its object, and to suggest such plans as he thought most advisable in this emergency. He then sent a mulatto officer to Le Clerc to announce, that no permission could be granted him or his forces to land, till the dispatches which were expected from the general-in-chief should arrive; accompanying this message with a threat, that should Le Clerc attempt to land his forces, the white

inhabitants would be considered as hostages for his conduct; or should he make an attack on the town, it would be followed by its immediate conflagration.

So decided a step on the part of Christophe, surprised and enraged the French general; and he answered by letter, in a tone partly conciliatory and partly threatening, but which had no other effect on Christophe than that of fixing him in the resolution he had formed, and producing a firm and manly reply. Although Le Clerc had not yet declared his intentions, so that it was unknown whether they were friendly or hostile to the freedom of the negroes, the uncertainty respecting this point, together with Christophe's responsibility as commander-in-chief at the Cape, and his regard for the interests of his brethren, fully justified him in adopting these measures. At the same time, the absence of the civil and military chief, without whose knowledge and consent no step of importance could be taken, left no doubt on his own mind with regard to the course he should pursue. And as soon as he learnt from Toussaint, that his views respecting the object of the expedition corresponded with his own, and received his commands to continue to oppose its landing till his return, he determined on resis-

tance as his imperious duty, collected together all the native troops of that district, and called on them to stand prepared to act on the defensive the moment an attack should be made.

In the mean time, Le Clerc, disregarding the message of Christophe, and refusing to await dispatches from Touissaint, had effected a landing a few miles west of the Cape, and had directed his troops to proceed towards that place with all possible haste. The negro leader, hearing of these movements, and knowing that the French troops were too numerous, and too well disciplined, to afford him any reasonable hope of making a successful resistance, reluctantly gave orders to set the town on fire in various places, and then retreated in good order, carrying off with him more than two thousand of the white inhabitants as hostages. As to the sanguinary threat of massacring them, which he is said to have issued, it must be mentioned to his honour, that he never gave any orders to that effect, nor manifested the smallest indication of a design to perpetrate such an outrage.

What the French general felt himself unable to accomplish by force, he endeavoured to effect by stratagem and hypocrisy; and though the firmness of Touissaint had baffled his at-

tempt to ensnare that chief, and to prevail on him to abandon the cause of the negroes, he still hoped, either by false promises or bribery, to get the principal leaders of the black forces into his power. Having, at the conclusion of a truce, received an additional supply of troops from France, he instantly renewed hostilities, and proceeded to declare "general Touissaint and general Christophe to be put out of the protection of the law, and to order the citizens to pursue them and treat them as enemies of the French republic." Nothing had tended to enrage Le Clerc more than the determined opposition of Christophe; and he hoped by this means to secure his person, and thus to deprive the cause he had espoused of his assistance. But the negroes were at this moment too warmly attached to their leader, to be induced by promises or threats to betray him into the enemy's hand; and the only effect which this measure produced on Christophe himself was to render him more vigilant and more active in guarding against the treachery, and in opposing the designs, of the foe.

But a short time only had elapsed before he was called to witness what appeared sufficient to shake his firmest resolutions, and to deprive him of every hope of success. By the grossly

false pretensions of Le Clerc, and his diligence in communicating them to the negroes, not only great numbers of the soldiers, but several of the black officers also, became disposed to desert the standard of Christophe, and to join the French army. Alarmed at this unexpected change among his troops, he employed every argument in his power, to convince them of the Frenchman's baseness, and villainous intentions. But argument producing no visible effect, he was compelled to entreat that, if they valued their honour, their liberty, or their lives, they would not now abandon a cause for which they had so long and so valiantly contended. When both argument and entreaty failed, he threatened to make a terrible example of the first in whom he should discover the slightest disposition to go over to the enemy. But all his efforts proved ineffectual; and the number of his troops continued to diminish daily.

Christophe, however, remained firm to his original purpose, and like the other black generals, with whom he was acting in concert, retired with the remains of his forces, to the mountains; resolved, if there was little probability of defeating the enemy, to harass and distress them by every means in his power.

He would not hastily conclude that all was lost, and therefore under these discouraging circumstances, he did not abandon himself to despair. He still indulged the hope that the difficulties presented to the French, by the nature of the country and the destructive effects of the climate, might gradually lessen their forces, and eventually compel them to abandon their enterprize: or that some circumstance might occur which would discover their real designs to the negroes who had deserted to their standard, and induce them to refuse their assistance. Le Clerc, meanwhile, encouraged by the whites, and by the numerous desertions from the negro generals, publicly declared his intentions, and directed the planters to resume their former authority over the negroes. So premature a step must have defeated its own object, had he not, in order to repair his error, immediately published a proclamation, in which he proposed a new-organization of the colony, the basis of which was to be liberty and equality to men of all colours. This fraudulent proclamation, containing the most hypocritical professions of sincerity, effectually answered its purpose; and by silencing the fears of the negroes, enabled him to proceed without any increased opposition.

During these transactions, Christophe, whose troops were now so greatly diminished that he could scarcely number three hundred as his followers, wandered about in the mountains and interior parts of the Island, harassed on every side, and doubtful what measures it would be most safe and honourable for him to pursue. So powerful were the forces of the enemy, strengthened by the addition of several thousands of negroes, that however determined to resist their designs, he plainly perceived that any opposition which he or his fellow chiefs were capable of offering, would now be of little avail. At the same time, the few negroes that yet remained in his service, began to grow weary of the contest, and to wish for repose from their exertions, and deliverance from the dangers which surrounded them. Still undaunted himself, he endeavoured to cheer and animate their nearly exhausted spirits, and to encourage them to persevere in their opposition. He reminded them of their rights as men, on the one hand; and represented to them the unjust designs of their enemies, on the other: he assured them that their persecutors must be ultimately defeated, if not by the force of arms, yet by the unhealthiness of the climate; and that therefore what they now en-

dured would eventually contribute to their triumph. "What!" said he, "shall we, after all our exertions and sufferings, despair of success at last? No: we fight in the best of causes: the object for which we contend is not only just and glorious, but dear as life itself: justice is on our side; and notwithstanding our present difficulties, perseverance will ensure to us the victory."—But his troops were already too much disheartened to be influenced by these considerations; and being frequently without provisions, vigorously pursued by a relentless foe, and always in difficulties and dangers, they seemed on the very verge of despair.

At this important crisis, the proclamation of Le Clerc, proposing a new organization of the colony on the basis of liberty and equality, reached them; nor could it have fallen into their hands at a moment more favourable to his present designs. They considered that it provided for their freedom, the great object for which they were contending; and forgetting the duplicity of the French general, giving full credit to his professions, and hoping that compliance with his proposals would effectually put an end to their trials and sufferings, they were unanimously of opinion that they should lay down their arms, and cheerfully accede to his wishes.

Such was now the situation of this brave and intrepid negro. He at length became disposed to enter into a treaty for suspending or terminating hostilities, provided it could be effected on safe and honourable terms; and though he still resolved never to abandon the cause of liberty, he made a law of necessity, and submitted to existing circumstances. The conditions of his compromise were of the most honourable nature, both as it respected himself, and the cause in which he was engaged. He required a general amnesty for his troops, the preservation of his rank and that of his officers, and the extension of the same terms to his colleague, Dessalines, and to Touissaint the general-in-chief. It was long before the French general could be prevailed on to grant these conditions; but Christophe would submit to no other, and they were finally accepted.

Though compelled to this measure by the necessity of his affairs, Christophe had too much sincerity, and too high a sense of honour and justice, to make any mental reserves; or to form a secret intention of violating the conditions of his compromise, as long as they should be observed by the opposite party. At the same time, he placed entire confidence in the honour of Le Clerc, never suspecting that

a treaty regularly formed and solemnly agreed to, would be violated without scruple, the first moment a favourable opportunity might present itself.

A circumstance, however, soon occurred, which served to convince him of the hypocrisy of the French general, and to show the negroes who had deserted their leaders, of the ultimate object of the expedition. Secretly enraged at having failed to accomplish his purpose, and considering Touissaint, on account of his abilities and influence, the main support of their cause, Le Clerc determined to deprive them of their commander-in-chief, and by this villainous act, to ensure an easy and decisive conquest. He therefore lay in wait for him,—seized him while alone and unprotected,—bound him in chains,—and sent him to France as a prisoner.[1]

[1] The subsequent fate of this "truly great man" was such as might have been anticipated, from the character of those into whose hands he had fallen. "On the voyage from St. Domingo to France, he was refused all intercourse with his family; he was confined constantly to his cabin, and the door was guarded by soldiers with fixed bayonets. On the arrival of the ship at Brest, no time was lost in hurrying him on shore. On the deck only was he permitted to have an interview with his wife and children, whom he was to meet no more in this life.—He was conveyed in a close carriage, and under a strong escort of cavalry, to the castle of Joux, in

The moment intelligence of this circumstance reached the ears of Christophe, astonished at its baseness, and no longer bound to observe the conditions of his late compromise, he determined to make one last desperate effort, either to crush the enemies of his race, or to

Normandy, where he was committed to the strictest confinement, with a single negro attendant.—

" From the castle of Joux, Touissaint, at the approach of winter, was removed to Besançon, and there immured in a cold, damp, and gloomy dungeon, like one of the worst criminals. This dungeon may be regarded as his sepulchre. Let the reader imagine the horrors of such a prison, to one who had been born, and lived near threescore years, in a West Indian climate; where warmth and air are never wanting, even in jails; and where the beams of the sun are only too bright and continual. It has been confidently asserted by respectable authority, that the floor of the dungeon was covered with water. In this deplorable condition, without any comfort, or alleviation of his sufferings, he lingered through the winter, and died in the spring of the following year."—History of St. Domingo, chap. viii. p. 270, 271.

It is well known that Touissaint was as distinguished for the excellence of his character, as for the superiority of his abilities. But there is one circumstance in his life, which places the former in an interesting point of view, and cannot fail to excite our admiration: I mean the manner in which he conducted himself, when Le Clerc proposed to him either to abandon the cause of liberty, or to lose his two sons. The latter were brought by Le Clerc from France, where they had been sent for their education; and the proposal was made

drive them from the Island. The indignity and cruelty with which they treated Touissaint, previously to his removal, he considered a sufficient proof, that should they succeed in re-establishing slavery, the negroes would be subjected to greater rigours than they had ever suffered, and their leaders be executed as rebels. To stand still at this moment would be, he concluded, tamely to abandon the cause most dear to him; and he had long resolved

by their tutor, when he introduced them to their father on their return. Touissaint embraced them with the utmost tenderness, wept over them, and was for some time in extreme agony, apparently hesitating whether he should yield to his affection as a father, or follow his duty as a patriot. He at length wiped away his tears, delivered his sons to the tutor, saying, "Take back my children, since it must be so. I will be faithful to my brethren and my God." (Vide Hist. St. Dom. c. viii. pp. 232—241.) The youths were brought back to Le Clerc, but what became of them afterwards could never be learnt.

Nothing can be more gratifying than to observe the manner in which the memory of Touissaint is cherished by the Haytians. They name their children after him, speak of him with enthusiasm, and believe him to have been one of the greatest and best men that ever lived.

The universal testimony of the Haytians to his virtues and talents, especially of those who were personally acquainted with him, confirms the account given of his character in the History just referred to. Vide chap. vii. pp. 187—200.

rather to sacrifice his life, than to relinquish his own freedom, or to endanger, by his indifference or neglect, that of his brethren. These were, in fact, feelings common to all the negro leaders. They saw no alternative but that of submitting to be deprived of their liberty, or of shedding their blood in its defence; and they bravely and unanimously resolved on the latter. But Christophe was among the foremost in forming plans of revenge, and in urging an active and immediate resistance. He exerted all his powers of persuasion, in rousing those who were either insensible of the impending danger, or slow in their endeavours to avert it; and he laboured to encourage those who appeared to contemplate it with terror, and to consider escape impossible. Every moment lost in delay, he thought, was yielding an advantage to their oppressors. He used his utmost diligence in collecting the scattered troops, and in organizing those who fled to his standard. He employed every argument that his indignation and desire of revenge could suggest, to revive their hatred of France, and of the agents she had appointed to accomplish her unjust purposes. The name of France, he declared, should never be mentioned but with execrations; nor her generals be spoken of but as

allied, in character and disposition, to the blood-hounds they employed in their service. In short, he left nothing undone, to determine the wavering, to animate the disheartened, and to prepare all for this last and desperate struggle; and fearless himself of approaching dangers, he confidently relied on the justice of his cause, for its ultimate and complete triumph.

The subsequent cruelties of both parties, the dangers to which they were alternately exposed, their losses and sufferings, together with the result of the contest in favour of the negroes, have been faithfully narrated by others, and require not to be particularly noticed in this place. It is only necessary to describe the conduct of Christophe during this interesting period. And if what was frequently related of him at Cape François be correct, (and there is no reason to doubt it,) the feats of valour which he achieved were such, that had the cause he espoused been more popular, his name would have been blazoned forth as one of the first heroes of his day. Throughout the contest, he displayed that courage and hardihood of soul, which no dangers or sufferings could overcome. Neither the perils to which he was continually exposed, nor the frequent failures which he suffered, from the defective discipline and scanty

numbers of his soldiers, ever rendered him less sanguine in his hopes, less determined in his resolution, or less active and daring in his conduct. Even when their losses were most severe, and their final success most improbable, his constancy remained unshaken, and his courage undaunted. He endured toils, wants, and sufferings, with a degree of fortitude which none but the bravest minds have ever evinced. He watched all the movements of the enemy so steadily, that no opportunity of gaining advantage over them escaped his observation, or was allowed to pass unimproved. Day and night he was on the alert, now encouraging his soldiers,—now seeking out and pursuing the enemy,—now leading forth to battle. When engaged in actual conflict, he fearlessly exposed his person; and by his example, as well as by his persuasions, animated his troops, and inspired them with invincible courage. They beheld their leader the first to face danger,—the last to draw back. If they suffered a momentary defeat, he encouraged them still to hope and wait the event: when success crowned their arms, he assured them it was the earnest of approaching victory. His skill and caution provided against every emergency; his courage increased and his hopes brightened, as the con-

test grew more arduous, and the dangers more appalling; till at length he beheld the foe completely vanquished, and was gratified with the triumph of justice over oppression, and with the firm establishment of liberty and independence.

During the life of Dessalines, who continued to hold the supreme command, principally on account of his long services, Christophe submitted to his government; and as actively engaged in promoting the good of the people, and the security of the Island, as his own limitted authority, and the caprices of his superior would allow. His extraordinary abilities, his past exertions, and his rank as second in command, marked him out as the man best qualified among them to succeed that chief; and immediately on the death of the *Emperor*, he prepared to take the reins of government into his own hands.

IV.

CONTESTS BETWEEN CHRISTOPHE AND PETION.

On his succession to sovereign power, Christophe assumed the title of *Chief of the government of Hayti*, judging it more correctly expressive of his authority, and more becoming his pretensions, than that adopted by his predecessor. But scarcely had he taken measures, to tranquillize the yet unsettled state of the Island, or to establish a constitution suited to the condition and character of the people, when a powerful rival appeared in arms against him. This was *Petion*, a mulatto of considerable distinction, and no less celebrated for his ablities, than for the rank which he had long held in the army, and for the influence he had acquired over the troops under his command.

His education alone gave him a decided superiority over the black generals. Like many other mulattoes, he was sent to France in the early part of his life, and educated at the military academy at Paris;—a circumstance

from which he could not have failed to reap the most important advantages. The period during which he resided in that metropolis, was not, indeed, the most favourable for affording him correct ideas of liberty and of government; and he probably returned to his native island imbued with the political principles of the day. But his natural good sense, and the knowledge which he afterwards acquired of men in general, and of the negro character in particular, had long enabled him to correct his views, and to discard those systems which, however plausible in theory, have hitherto been invariably found impracticable.

Petion was especially distinguished from Christophe, to whom he now opposed himself, by a mildness of temper, and an amiableness of deportment, equally rare among negroes and mulattoes. A witness of the injustice of the French, and exposed, during their possession of the colony, to the oppressions of their government, it cannot be supposed that he would never avail himself of opportunities of revenge; or that, while defending his rights, he would always abstain from personally engaging in those cruelties which characterized the contest. Yet such was the benevolence of his disposition,

his readiness to forgive injuries, and his aversion to measures of violence and destruction, that he rather discouraged than promoted them, and was never among the foremost to meditate plans of revenge, or to carry them into execution. He nevertheless evinced a degree of ardour, in espousing and maintaining the cause of freedom, not exceeded by any of the negro leaders. He had too deeply felt the unjust inferiority under which the mulattoes suffered, and had witnessed too many of the miseries attendant on slavery, to remain an inactive spectator of the contest waged in defence of liberty. As far as his talents, his influence, and his exertions, could assist in promoting the common cause, they were cheerfully devoted to its interests; to the last, he manfully asserted the rights of men of his own colour, and as earnestly contended for the emancipation of the negroes; and by his ardour and perseverance, together with the importance which his superior knowledge and attainments stamped on his character, he had, at this period, risen to be the third general in command.

During the life of Dessalines he had succeeded, by his mild and conciliating manners, in inspiring his troops with the most enthusiastic attachment to him as their general. He

had been equally successful with his officers, who, however desirous of promoting their own aggrandizement, honoured his person, respected his talents, and considered his interests and their own inseparably connected. In short, he had effectually won the affection of his soldiers, and was persuaded of their readiness to support him in whatever measure he might propose. Under these circumstances, he had been long meditating an accession of authority, and now aimed at sovereign power.

The unsettled state of affairs, also, at this moment, afforded a favourable opportunity to those whose ambition might induce them to aspire after the supreme command, and whose resources might justify their hopes of success. The system pursued by Dessalines partook too strongly of the cruelty of his character, to admit of its continuance after his death; and a new constitution had not yet been formed:—he, therefore, who should endeavour to establish that mode of government most agreeable to the wishes and opinions of the people, if aided by the influence of some of the principal men, and supported by the army, stood the fairest chance of supplanting his rivals, and of obtaining the sovereignty. Christophe, it is true, had been already declared generalissimo of the

forces, and chief of the Haytian government; but his claims to succession were not such as to silence every pretender; his conduct, also, towards the soldiers had, in some instances, been marked with too much severity to admit of his becoming generally popular; and while his courage and military skill were universally acknowledged, his ability to govern so large a population yet remained to be proved.

Besides the influence which Petion had acquired over so large a portion of the army, he was, at the period of Dessaline's death, commander-in-chief of the forces at Port-au-prince; the chief town in the southern part of the Island. This circumstance was more favourable to the accomplishment of his present designs, than any other that could have occurred. It furnished him with claims to the sole command, which, he readily persuaded his adherents, admitted of no dispute, and which, he determined, no opposition from Christophe, however vigorous or lasting, should induce him to relinquish: it gave him authority, not only over Port-au-prince and its immediate districts, but over several other towns also of considerable size and importance: and it provided him with resources sufficient to warrant the most sanguine hopes of a successful

enterprize. At the same time, his distance from Cape François, the head-quarters of Christophe, precluded the possibility of information of his proceedings reaching that place, before he was fully prepared to support his pretensions; and he was thus enabled to arrange his plans with the utmost secrecy, and furnished with the means which he thought necessary for their accomplishment.

Petion always affirmed that his reasons for separating from Christophe, and opposing his claims, were his cruelty and his inability to govern. Hence he caused relations of his oppression to be industriously circulated among the soldiers, and urged them as so many motives to attempt his overthrow; while he represented his talents as of so inferior an order, as utterly to unfit him to stand at the head of affairs. But whatever may have been Christophe's real character, the proceedings of Dessalines would have hardly allowed him an opportunity of evincing cruelty towards his fellow-negroes; and in those instances in which he had assisted, during the life of that chief, he might be considered as having acted solely in obedience to the commands of a sanguinary tyrant. At the same time, his elevation to the first generalship of the army, from

the time that the French quitted the Island, was some indication, at least, of his ability to undertake its government.

Petion urged his own pretensions with greater appearance of reason. He considered that none, not even Christophe, possessed more just claims to sovereign power than himself; that although the latter might have been his superior in courage, he, on the other hand, equalled him in his attachment to the cause of liberty, and in his adherence to it, during the most eventful periods of the contest waged in its defence; and that in other important respects, from his superior education, and his more extensive intercourse with men, he possessed advantages to which the negro general could lay no claim.

He also felt the weight of other considerations. Although the mulattoes had, from the beginning of the commotions, united with the negroes in asserting and maintaining their rights, and deemed the cause in which they were engaged as equally involving the interests of both; yet the former, having been always free, had not so fully overcome their prejudices as to consider themselves, in all respects, on an equality with the blacks. The mulatto, though he was careful to conceal his thoughts, evidently

felt conscious of his superiority; and the negro was frequently constrained, however reluctantly, to acknowledge it. The tyranny of Dessalines awed both for a time into submission; but when another negro was nominated as his successor, Petion, with other mulattoes, despised his pretensions, and determined never to submit to an authority which they felt it impossible to respect.

In addition to the opinion of his claims, and the force of his prejudices, he felt the influence of a principle to which he was cheerfully disposed to yield. It was impossible for him not to feel that to stand at the head of a numerous and powerful army, to become the chief of a large and important Island, and to be foremost in laying the foundation of a permanent empire, were objects worthy of a just and laudable ambition. The Haytians, he considered, presented to the world at this period a novel spectacle: through their personal exertions, and at the expence of their blood, they had lately effected their emancipation from slavery: they were now to put to the test what had been repeatedly affirmed of their means and capacities: and Petion well knew that every one who should take an active and conspicuous part in their proceedings, would

draw on him more or less of the attention both of Europe and America.

The disappointment and rage of Christophe, on his first receiving intelligence of Petion's opposition, for a moment exceeded all bounds; and although policy would have dictated to him to conceal his feelings, he could not forbear expressing them with unbecoming violence, even in the presence of his soldiers. He conceived that from the zeal and devotedness which he had, during so long a period, and under so many difficulties, displayed in the cause of liberty; from his being the first general of the army at the death of the late chief; and from his having been already acknowledged as his successor by a majority of the people, he was entitled above all others to the supreme command, and best qualified to direct the affairs of the government. He knew, indeed, that there were others ambitious of power, and ready to seize and improve every opportunity of advancing their interests: but he felt confident also that his known courage and firmness, the rank which he held in the army, and the influence he had acquired over many of the principal men, would be sufficient to deter the most aspiring among them from attempting

either to oppose his claims, or to render his title doubtful. When, therefore, he learnt that a powerful party was formed against him, and was determined to submit its pretensions to the decision of arms, his surprize and vexation far exceeded the confidence he had previously entertained of his security; and he prepared for the approaching contest with his accustomed vigour, animated by unwonted rage, and threatening the most terrible vengeance.

In the meantime, while Petion was completing the arrangements which he had already commenced, and Christophe was diligently employed in collecting his forces, various skirmishes took place between them, with greater or less loss on both sides. These encounters served to render both chiefs more fixed in their resolution to support their pretensions, and their partizans, more fierce and inveterate towards each other: and in order to animate and encourage their soldiers, those of the former were continually reminded of the cruelty and oppression to which they would become subject, should they submit to his rival; and those of the latter, of his personal dangers, sufferings, and exploits, in the cause of emancipation, and of his consequent and indisputable claim to sovereign power.

The moment at length arrived when the strength of the contending parties was to be tried; and a fierce and bloody battle was fought between the two armies, at a short distance from Port-au-prince. The troops brought into the field, on this occasion, were composed of the ablest and most experienced of the negro soldiers; and from the commencement of the attack, they displayed a degree of courage which would have done honour to a better cause. Whether it arose from their having been so long accustomed to blood-shed, or from an enthusiastic attachment to the cause of their respective leaders, never did two armies engage in fight with greater ardour, or more fiercely bent on each other's destruction. For a long time it appeared doubtful to which chief fortune had alotted the day: In the event, however, it declared in favour of Christophe; and Petion, chiefly from the disadvantages of his situation, was defeated with considerable loss, and obliged to save himself and his remaining troops by flight. The great number left dead on the field, was a melancholy proof of the ardour of the conflict, and of the injuries each party was likely to sustain, unless a speedy termination of hostilities should be effected. But Christophe, elated by this success, and

hoping to complete his triumph over his rival, pursued him to the gates of Port-au-prince, and laid seige to that city: and Petion, though reduced to great extremity, determined on making the most vigorous resistance in his power, even at the risk of being utterly overthrown; —the rather, because he saw that to withdraw his pretensions, or to abandon his project, at this moment, would inevitably bring on himself and his followers immediate ruin.

A short time, however, served to convince Christophe that the reduction of the city, if at all practicable, would require a longer period and greater force than he at first anticipated. While considering by what means he might effect a more speedy conquest, he received intelligence that many in the northern districts of the Island were growing disaffected to his cause, and that his continued absence from those parts tended to increase the numbers, and to strengthen the prejudices, of those who were yet but partially averse to his government. This disaffection among those who had hitherto admitted his claims to the sovereignty, indicated, he feared, distrust of his ability and designs, —perhaps a resolution to unite with his rival; and he concluded that unless it should receive a timely check, it might eventually break forth

into open and declared rebellion. For these reasons he raised the siege, and hastened with all possible expedition towards Cape François.

Having, on his arrival, made such temporary arrangements in that place as existing circumstances required, he proceeded to visit the towns and districts of the north; hoping that his presence among the people for a short period would sufficiently intimidate the discontented and factious, and cause his authority to be universally acknowledged and respected. He reminded them how greatly they were indebted to his influence and exertions for their deliverance from slavery and from tyranny: he assured them that however desirous he felt of standing at their head, as chief and governor of the Island, their improvement and happiness were the sole objects at which he aimed: he told them that as no existing leader equalled him in his dangers and exploits in their behalf, so none had so strong a claim on their gratitude, or was so justly entitled to their support: he affirmed that none could lament more sincerely than himself, the present distracted state of the Island, or would more cheerfully make whatever sacrifices were necessary to restore its peace, and to promote its prosperity: he declared, at the same time, his resolution to

punish with the utmost severity those who should dare to dispute his claims, or oppose his government: and added, that as he had already met with the greatest success in contending with a powerful faction, those in his own territories who should attempt to create disturbances, would have little chance of escaping the vengeance due to their ingratitude and temerity. These addresses, delivered with great ability and firmness, together with the respect which his well known bravery inspired, served to check the turbulent spirit of the restless and disaffected, and to strengthen the attachment of those who were previously favourable to his cause. By this means two important objects were secured: he rendered his sway over the northern districts of the Island a work of comparative ease; and placed his authority on too firm a foundation to be shaken by the subsequent attempts of his rival.

On his return to Cape François, his first object was to lay a permanent foundation for the establishment of his power, by forming a regular constitution; and a council, composed of the generals and principal citizens, was speedily convened for this purpose. This constitution declared, That every person residing on the territory of Hayti was free in the fullest sense:

That slavery was for ever abolished: That all property was under the protection of the government: That the government of Hayti should be composed, first, of a chief magistrate, and secondly, of a council of state: That general-in-chief, Henry Christophe, should be president and generalissimo of the forces, both by sea and land, of the state of Hayti: That the trust of president and generalissimo should be for life: That the armed force, and the administration of the finances, should be under his direction: That he should make treaties with foreign nations, conclude peace, declare war, consider the means of favouring and increasing the population of the country, and propose and execute laws: That the council of state should be composed of nine members, nominated by the president, of whom two thirds, at least, should be generals: and That its functions should be to receive the proposition of laws from the president, to determine the amount of taxes, and the mode of collecting them, to sanction the treaties concluded by the president, and to fix upon the mode of recruiting the army.[1]—In addition to these regulations, arrangements were made for the administration of justice, the support of

[1] Vide History of St. Domingo, Appendix iv.

religion, the establishment of education, the encouragement of agriculture and commerce, and the security of the neighbouring colonies.

During this interval, Petion was engaged in repairing the losses he had sustained by the late battle, and in providing the means of defence, in the event of future attacks. Having found also how seriously he had been deceived in his views of Christophe and of his resources, and in his hopes of easily triumphing over him, he became less sanguine in his expectations, and more cautious and prudent in his measures: and by the time his rival had finished his arrangements in the north, he was fully recovered from the shock of his first defeat, and in the number and bravery of his troops, prepared to engage anew in the contest. At the same time, Christophe, unshaken in his resolution of obtaining the sole command of the Island, and encouraged by his speedy and effectual suppression of disturbances in his own territories, as well as by his former success in the south, was now anxious to renew hostilities, and to submit the decision of their claims to the event of a civil war.

Whatever may have been the motives of Petion in effecting a separation from Christophe, it was impossible for him not to have

foreseen its consequences. It placed the Island in a most critical situation in case of invasion by France: for had an attempt been made by that nation at this time to recover the colony, so bitter was the animosity of the parties, that it is doubtful whether they would have united against a common foe. It was still more prejudicial to the interests of the people, whose present condition required the united skill and vigour of all their principal men, in order to their improvement and prosperity. The soldiers especially, had, for a long period, been accustomed to war and all its attendant cruelties; and the reign of Dessalines had, by the barbarities he caused them to perpetrate, rendered them still more fierce and ungovernable. It required therefore to adopt measures calculated to subdue their thirst for blood, to moderate their impetuosity, to render them more firm in their dispositions and purposes, and to prepare them for cultivating and enjoying the advantages of peace and civilization. But instead of a union of counsel and effort, so important towards the establishment of a well organized and permanent system of government, and from the present state of the negroes so peculiarly necessary, these chiefs now opposed each other's plans, and eagerly sought to injure each

other's party. The animosity of the soldiers, fomented by the representations of their respective leaders, urged them to seek alternately occasions of injury and revenge; the courage and hardihood they had acquired in defending their rights, they now exercised in oppressing each other; and the men who should have sat down to enjoy the fruits of their successful struggle for liberty, were now eager to destroy each other in the cause of two ambitious leaders.

Numerous were the battles which, from this time, and during a period of several years, were fought between these rival chiefs. They frequently brought all their forces into the field, and rushed to the fight with inconceivable ardour, each as determined on conquering the other, as both had formerly been in expelling their common oppressors. The standard of Christophe was sometimes victorious; at others, that of Petion: but the success of neither party offered any thing more than a momentary triumph, a small accession of territory, or the capture of some town which they were soon to lose again. Yet so furiously were they bent on each other's destruction, that in whatever manner these encounters terminated, each party grew more eager to renew the conflict,—the defeated, that they might recover the ad-

vantages they had lost;—and the successful, that they might the more speedily realize a complete victory. To what circumstances the alternate success and defeat of the armies are to be attributed; or what remarkable instances occurred of military skill and valour in the chiefs, or of firmness among the soldiers, are matters which have never been recorded, and must now be forgotten. Their frequent contests, however, served to prove the equal strength and discipline of the troops, and the consequent improbability of either party obtaining a final conquest over the other; while it was no less obvious that, should hostilities continue, the Island must be eventually exhausted of its inhabitants, and be left free for its former possessors.—Meanwhile, its plantations, which, for a long time previous to these civil dissensions, had ceased to exhibit any traces of former labour, were still but partially cultivated, and in many instances totally neglected; and its commerce, instead of becoming a fruitful source of wealth and prosperity, or the means of maintaining a friendly intercourse with foreign powers, was necessarily so limited in its extent, as to afford neither great nor permanent advantage. Thus in every point of view, the division of the Haytians into two

parties so bitterly opposed to each other, proved more destructive of their tranquillity, and more detrimental to their improvement than even the tyranny of Dessalines. Had the quarrel of their leaders more directly involved their interests, they would have had less reason for lamenting its unhappy consequences. But should one be successful in conquering the other, the success of the triumphant chief and the overthrow of his rival, could affect the people at large only in proportion to the difference of their respective qualifications to exercise the supreme command: and since neither their former exertions in behalf of liberty, nor the success of their present contentions, could entitle either of them to sovereign power, but the voice of the people alone,—the object of their contest, whatever might be its result, was the gratification of their ambition and vanity.

In no circumstance did the effects of these contentions more strikingly appear, than in the treatment of prisoners. Those taken by Christophe were used with extreme severity. A considerable number of these unhappy men were confined within the ruins of a large mansion near Cape François, of which little remained but the walls. There, exposed a

great part of the day to the burning rays of the sun, almost destitute of clothes, fed chiefly on cassava and water, and prevented from effecting their escape, by the height of the walls, the heavy chains with which they were bound, and the weakness to which their cruel treatment had reduced them, they dragged out a miserable existence, bitterly cursing their fate, and imploring vengeance on the authors of their misery.

While walking on one occasion near the ruins in which these men were confined, one of them suddenly made his appearance, and directed his steps towards me. I knew that if discovered there, the circumstance, on reaching the ears of Christophe, might be construed by him into an attempt to assist the prisoner to escape, and thus occasion me no little trouble and vexation. But being desirous of making some inquiry respecting the condition of these unfortunate beings, I waited till he reached the spot on which I stood. He was a tall meagre-looking negro, having every thing in his appearance calculated to excite pity and disgust. The expression of his countenance was even terrific; indicating, at first sight, a partial degree of insanity, but occasioned most probably by a disposition naturally fierce,

grown more so from his occupations as a soldier, and his sufferings as a prisoner. With the exception of a ragged and filthy piece of cloth tied about his middle, he was destitute of clothing; his legs were laden with heavy chains, which confined them so near to each other, as to render it both difficult and painful for him to walk; and his whole body exhibited the marks of a loathsome disease.

His first request was for money; and when asked for what he wanted it? "To buy a little bread," said he, "for I have not tasted any for several months, and should greatly like to procure some." "But have you not," it was asked, "sufficient food allowed you?" "We have nothing," he replied, "but cassava, and not always sufficient of that." I then inquired how long he had been confined in that place, and in what manner he and his companions were treated: to which he answered, that he was taken prisoner in one of the battles between Christophe and Petion; and proceeded to add, —"the party to which I belonged being driven from the ground we occupied, we endeavoured to gain the top of the neighbouring mountain; but as I was wounded, I could not ascend so fast as my companions, and unable to make any

resistance, I was soon overtaken by my pursuers, and easily overcome. By my earnest entreaties, and their forbearance, my life was spared; but I was instantly chained, kept for some time without food, and at last driven to this prison. Here I have been confined a long time, almost worn out by vexation, frequent want of such food as I require, and the cruel treatment of the guards who daily visit us. Often have I wished to obtain a sword or pistol, that I might put an end to my miseries:—I would work, if I were permitted:—or if I could, how gladly would I escape to the mountains. But," continued he, pointing to his chains, "these prevent me: they are examined every day; and if it be thought that I have been endeavouring to extricate myself, stronger and heavier ones are then placed on. I have, however, succeeded at last in scaling one of the walls of the prison; but I cannot even now effect my escape."

He was proceeding, when I perceived at a distance a horseman riding towards the spot; and giving the prisoner a trifle, was about to leave him. At that moment the mingled expression of wildness, earnestness, and despair, exhibited in his countenance, was such as I had never before witnessed: while he exclaimed, "Do help me to escape; give me some instrument by which

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I may free myself from these chains, or my fate will be more dreadful than ever." If I had had an instrument suited to the purpose, whatever might have been the consequences, I should not have hesitated to give it him; but not being provided with one, and knowing that I could render him no assistance, I immediately walked away. He followed me at a short distance, when turning to repeat that it was not in my power to help him, and requesting that he would desist from following, he fell on his knees, saying, in *Patois*, "*Ah Mouchée, Anglois tonjours bon: baie moe couteau: baie moe couteau*—Englishmen are always kind: give me a knife: do give me a knife,"—and burst into tears. By this time the horseman had reached the spot; and riding up to the prisoner, struck him violently on the head with his sword, and then drove him back to the prison, severely punishing him all the way for having attempted to escape.

At length these ambitious leaders, finding their resources greatly diminished, and becoming less sanguine in their hopes of victory, began to grow weary of a contest, as prejudicial to their own interests as to those of the people; and though neither of them was

inclined to propose terms of accommodation, both appeared anxious to suspend hostilities. Petion was at that time in possession of the Mole of St. Nicholas, one of the largest towns in the colony; and from its situation, as well as from its size and population, one of the most important also; and as he had fortified it with a numerous garrison, and plentifully furnished it with arms, he considered its capture, either by seige or assault, a work too difficult for his opponent to accomplish. Christophe, on the other hand, perceiving its proximity to the towns which had submitted to him, had long resolved, ere he terminated the contest, to gain possession of a place of so much importance. He therefore made every preparation for an enterprize so difficult and arduous; selected the bravest of his troops; laid siege to the town in person; and determined that neither time nor labour should be spared in order to its accomplishment. During several weeks, the besieged made a firm and successful resistance; neither dismayed by the superior forces of the enemy, nor intimidated by the dangers by which they were threatened. But their courage could not supply the want of men, nor their resistance retard the progress of the foe; and they were at length compelled to deliver up

the town, as the only means of appeasing Christophe, and preserving their lives.

The capture of this place may be said to have terminated the contest. It had continued sufficiently long to prove the improbability of either party gaining the ascendancy; and both chiefs found that, by neglecting their agriculture and their commerce, they were retarding the improvement of the Island; and that while they were committing mutual injuries, they were also diminishing its strength, and endangering its safety. And though they did not enter into any formal treaty, nor agree that each, keeping possession of the territory which he now occupied, should maintain therein an independent government; they nevertheless suspended hostilities, and retired to their head quarters, to commence, at last, their plans of improvement and civilization.

It is difficult to say which of the chiefs was, at this time, in the most prosperous circumstances. The territory of Christophe was somewhat more extensive than that of his rival, but was, in many parts, less cultivated and less productive; and its towns, although more numerous, were said to be more thinly populated. The repeated engagements of the two armies showed, in the event, that their numbers

and strength were nearly equal. The majority of Petion's officers were mulattoes;—of Christophe's, negroes: and if the former were superior in skill, the latter excelled them in courage. The population was divided between the two chiefs into nearly equal parts. Christophe was inferior to Petion in commerce; but the riches of the negro chief rendered him, in this respect, superior to the mulatto.

V

CHRISTOPHE'S ELEVATION TO THE THRONE.

PREVIOUSLY to the cessation of hostilities, Christophe had selected Cape François for the seat of his government,—a place possessing many advantages, both on account of its local and relative situation. For although a great part of it had been destroyed, it still contained a considerable number of habitable houses; and its distance from the capital of Petion was greater, and from the other parts of the Island, more convenient, than that of any other town in his territories. Here, therefore, for the present he took up his residence, and proceeded to adopt such measures as he thought best calculated to preserve the peace of the Island, to establish his authority, and to promote the happiness of the people.

Since the death of Dessalines, a period of nearly six years had elapsed; during which Christophe had given fresh proofs of his skill and valour, in defending himself against a rival, equal in extent of authority and resources

to himself. On this account, his army entertained an opinion of his talents, higher even than that which they had previously formed. The most brave of his officers were compelled to admire his ability and courage, and to feel and acknowledge their own inferiority: the soldiers regarded him with such sentiments as are generally felt towards a great and distinguished hero: and the people at large had long considered him as one of their chief deliverers from the unjust oppressions of the French. They were all strongly impressed with the obligations they owed to his exertions, in the eventful and bloody contest for liberty; they felt these obligations increased, by his having contributed to their deliverance from the tyranny of the late emperor; and they considered him, while contending with his rival, as still exerting himself for the general welfare. With the exception of a few, therefore, who either envied his fame and exaltation, or feared lest his increasing influence should become dangerous to their freedom, Christophe was, at this period, as popular as he was brave and successful.

But though president of the state, and generalissimo of the forces, he still thought his power too limited, to enable him to accomplish

his plans; and considered the distinction he had obtained, but an inadequate reward for his exertions. The means it required to maintain his ground against his rival, had for a long time occupied his chief attention; but he was now at leisure to consider by what method he might extend his authority, and give strength and permanence to his regulations. To assume the title of king, and with it, its powers and prerogatives, appeared to him the most effectual method of accomplishing these objects: and after carefully weighing the difficulties attending it, and the dangers to which it might at first expose him, on the one hand; and on the other, the probable advantages to which it might lead, both with regard to the tranquillity of the people, and the security of his power, he ultimately resolved on the measure.

He employed, on this occasion, all the influence which his rank secured him, and all the prudence which a step so important and dangerous required. To men of weight, and especially to the members of the council, he at first cautiously suggested the propriety of the measure;—directed them to consider whether it might not contribute to the peace and prosperity of the state, to place one at its head

invested with kingly honours and authority;—and required them to be guided in their decision, solely by their opinion of the advantages likely to attend a step of so much importance;—at the same time, feeling assured that, in case their views should correspond with his wishes, there would be but one opinion respecting the person who should be elevated to this dignity. Some of the principal men decidedly opposed the measure; affirming that it could tend neither to the security of their liberty, nor to the benefit of the state; and expressing their fears lest it should prove injurious to themselves, and fatal to the opening prospects of improvement and prosperity. Whether they afterwards changed their opinion, or whether, as it was asserted, Christophe sent them to a distant part of the Island, and caused them to be privately murdered,[1]—their opposition was

[1] That Christophe was guilty of this crime is rather improbable. Those who opposed him in his attempt to ascend the throne, were few in number, and possessed of little influence: he had therefore nothing to fear from their opposition. A transaction of this nature could not be long or easily concealed; and its discovery would not only have defeated his designs, but have endangered both his authority and his life. At the same time, had the murder been committed, it must have been known to the rest of the principal men; and though they at first favoured his plan, it is dif-

without effect. The majority, from a conviction of the probable utility of the measure, or from a wish to conform to the views of their chief, fully entered into his plans, and resolved on their immediate adoption.

In conformity with this determination, the council of state shortly after assembled at Cape François, for the purpose of making those alterations in the government which the momentous step they contemplated necessarily required. Its members where men who, though destitute in a great measure of the advantages of education, yet were endowed by nature with superior abilities, and had acquired by their industry considerable information, especially on political topics. Having considered the subject of their deliberations with all possible attention, they were unanimously of opinion that the existing constitution, formed in haste during the civil dissensions, and drawn up with

ficult to conceive by what motives they could be prevailed upon, after this proof of tyranny, to carry it into execution. However, long after Christophe was declared king, suspicions of his guilt were entertained at Cape François; but from the difficulty of making inquiries on the subject, so little information could be obtained, that it must remain doubtful whether they were well-founded, or whether they originated in the dislike of those who envied his success.

a view to meet the exigencies of that period, was in many points extremely defective. The prerogatives of the chief, and the rights of the people, were not, they conceived, defined with sufficient precision; their code of laws, they considered, however judicious in some respects, required great emendations in others; and the mode of government hitherto practised was little suited, they thought, to the character and condition of their countrymen. A system of despotism, they felt assured, though conducted with policy, would never be suffered by a people so tenacious of their rights as the Haytians. The republican form of government, they conceived, would confine the authority of the chief within too narrow limits, and allow the people greater liberty than the majority of them were prepared to improve: and they finally declared it to be their opinion, that as no system was so perfectly calculated at once to secure their freedom, and to maintain the laws, as that of a limited monarchy, so it was as much their individual interest, as that of the state in general, to take measures in order to its establishment. With regard to the title of the supreme magistrate, "they further declared, that that of *emperor*, given to Dessalines, was inappropriate, except to those who pos-

sessed authority over various states and territories; that the title of president hardly conveyed the idea of supreme power; and that, in short, none was so proper as that of king."

The result of their deliberations was shortly afterwards published, and the document in which it was set forth, was denominated "The constitutional law of the council of state, for the establishment of royalty in Hayti."[1] By this law it was decreed that a monarchical form of government should be substituted for that more republican system which had been previously maintained; and that as an act of gratitude to their deliverer, and of duty to their country, Christophe should be declared king. It was also ordained that this title, with all its prerogatives and privileges, should descend to the male and legitimate descendants of his family, in a direct line, by elder birthright, for ever: That in default of male children in a direct line, the succession should pass into the family of the prince nearest akin to the sovereign, and the most ancient in dignity: and that if there were not an heir-apparent to the throne, the king should adopt

[1] History of St. Domingo: Appendix V.

the children of such prince of the kingdom as he might judge proper. It was further settled, That the king's consort should be declared queen: that the members of his family should bear the titles of princes and princesses, and be styled royal highnesses: and that all the princes, on their coming of age, should take their seats as members of the council of state.

By the same law it was resolved That an order of nobility should be established, consisting of those distinguished by their abilities, or by the services they had rendered their country: that they should be honoured with the usual titles of duke, count, or baron, according to their respective merits: and that these titles, with all their privileges, should be hereditary in their families.

It was moreover decreed That in the event of the king's minority, it should terminate on the completion of his fifteenth year: that during that period, he should be styled *Regent of the kingdom*, and be confided either to the care of his mother, or to the prince appointed by the preceding king: That a protector should, in the meantime, be chosen either from among the princes most nearly related to the king, or from among the great dignitaries of the state: that he should be empowered, until the regent

should be of age, to exercise in his name, all the prerogatives of the royal dignity: but that notwithstanding this authority, he should neither conclude any treaty of peace, alliance, or commerce, or make any declaration of war, without the advice of the general council; nor be permitted to nominate to the great dignities of the kingdom, or to the situations of general officers in the land or sea forces.

It was further enacted, That a *Great council* should be formed, consisting of the princes of the blood, princes, dukes, and counts,—nominated, chosen, and their number fixed, by the king: That his majesty should also choose a *Privy council* from among the dignitaries of the kingdom: That the great officers of the state should be constituted *Grand marshals of Hayti*; be chosen from among the generals of all ranks, according to merit; and on their retiring from active employment, retain their titles, rank, and a portion of their emoluments. Finally, it was determined that four ministers should be selected and appointed by the king,—the first, minister of war and marine;—the second, of finance and the interior;—the third, of foreign affairs;—and the last, of justice.

The particular duties of these *ministers*, and the powers of the *Great council*, were deter-

minated by subsequent regulations.[1] *The Secretary of State and Minister for foreign affairs* was required to be in constant attendance on the king, for the purpose of regulating whatever concerned the service of his majesty; the appointment, registry, and despatch of ministers; and the promulgation of edicts, warrants, and decrees. To his care were confided the seals of the kingdom, those of the *Orders* created by the king, and that of edicts, proclamations, and letters-patent; together with all memoirs, manuscripts, books, maps, and papers relating to the more important affairs of the state. It was moreover his duty to attend to the execution of treaties, manifestos, and political and commercial regulations; to correspond with ambassadors, resident ministers, and diplomatic and commercial agents; and to regulate the appointment, orders, and expences, of political and consular agents.

The duties of the *Minister of war and marine* were no less numerous and important. They consisted in the organization and equipment of troops; in inspecting the discipline, and regulating the movements, of the army; in providing for the military hospitals and royal

[1] Almanach Royal d'Hayti.

military school; in appointing the pay, rewards, and promotions, of the soldiers; and in superintending whatever related to the preservation of the military stores, the improvement of the army, and the defence of the Island.—The *Minister of justice* was, among other things, required to promulge the laws, to organize the courts of justice, and to maintain a constant correspondence with them on all things relating to their administration.—And finally, to the *Minister of finance and the interior*, were assigned all those important concerns which his office naturally embraces.

By the regulations relating to the *Great council* it was ordained, that it should hold its sittings at the royal palace, and assemble by virtue of the king's orders alone: that it should be occupied with whatever affairs his majesty might deem proper to submit to its consideration; especially with those relating to the four general departments of the government: and that on special occasions, it should change itself into a *High court royal*, when it should become empowered to take cognizance, and to examine the evidence, of any crimes imputed to any members of the royal family, to the great dignitaries of the kingdom, or to the nobility in general;—of attempts or plots

against the security of the kingdom, or the persons of the king, queen, or princes;—and of charges preferred against ministers, or other public functionaries.

Such is the substance of "The Constitutional Law for the establishment of royalty:" it was subscribed by all the members of the council of state, and dated the 28th of March, 1811; and immediately on its publication, Christophe was proclaimed, and shortly afterwards, crowned *King of Hayti*.[1]

[1] The elevation of Christophe to the throne was exceedingly ridiculed, at the time, in several of the French journals. De Vastey, a Haytian writer, to whom we have already referred, and of whom a short account will be found in the subsequent pages of these Sketches, notices this subject in the following manner:

"Un roi noir à St. Domingue! La couronne sur la tête d'un noir! Voilà ce que les publicistes Français, les journalistes, les faiseurs de systèmes de colonisation ne peuvent digérer; on dirait à les entendre, qu'un roi noir est un phénomène, qu'on n'a jamais vu dans le monde!

"De tous les préjugés qui affligent et déshonorent l'espèce humaine, il n'en existe pas un qui soit plus odieux, plus absurde, et plus fatal, dans toutes ses conséquences, que le préjugé des couleurs! Qui donc règnera sur les noirs, si les noirs ne peuvent être rois? La royauté est-elle aussi affectée exclusivement à la couleur blanche? Peut-il exister des motifs de réprobation dans la différence des couleurs qui diversifient les habitans de ce globe? Les qualités spécifiques

When intelligence of this circumstance reached Port-au-Prince, Petion and his partizans immediately viewed it as an act of mere arbitrary power on the part of Christophe, and regarded it as an additional proof that he who claimed to be the successor of Dessalines, would imitate his tyranny, exceed him if possible in cruelty, and eventually meet with a fate similar to that which had befallen the savage hero. Nor did they fail to represent it in this light to the inhabitants of the southern part of the

de l'homme, au physique et au moral, sont-elles préjugés sur les différences des couleurs ? La force, le courage, les vertus et les vices, les bons ou les mauvais penchans, prennent-ils leurs sources sur l'épiderme ou bien dans le cœur de l'homme ? Eh bien ! S'il en est ainsi, si la seule différence des couleurs est un crime à vos yeux, si la couleur blanche doit régner exclusivement sur l'univers, armez-vous donc, revoltez-vous contre les vues du créateur, qui a voulu qu'il eut des variétés d'hommes sur la terre comme dans les animaux, et les autres productions qui sont les œuvres de sa munificence ! Races Scythiques, Mongoliennes, et Ethiopiennes ; blanches, jaunes, et noires, opprimez-vous ! haïssez-vous ! parceque vous n'êtes pas de la même couleur ! exterminez-vous ! la couleur victorieuse régnera exclusivement sur l'univers !—O aveuglément ! O passions des hommes ! à quoi n'entraînez-vous pas ? voilà cependant la doctrine de ceux qui prêchent les préjugés de couleurs ! voilà les fruits tant vantés des lumières et de la civilisation du siècle où nous vivons ! "—*Reflexions Politiques :* pp. 17—19.

Island; and especially to those Europeans and Americans who visited Port-au-Prince for the purposes of commerce. By this means it became generally believed that Christophe was no less a tyrant than his predecessor; and that the negroes of the northern part of St. Domingo had dispatched one cruel and despotic chief, to make room for another; who, though more prudent in his measures, was not less savage in his disposition, nor less violent in his conduct.

In this instance, however, the motives by which he was influenced, and the manner in which he accomplished his object, have been partly misrepresented. Christophe had too much penetration, and felt the nature of his situation at this period too sensibly, to allow him to enter on any measure of importance, without the advice and approbation of his principal adherents. He always recollected that an active and skilful foe was at no great distance, who was ready to seize every opportunity, and to avail himself of every plausible pretence, in order to sow the seeds of dissension among his soldiers, and to render them disaffected to his cause. At the same time, the attachment of the people to liberty was enthusiastic, and their resolution to resist all attempts to encroach on their rights unshaken; and he

could not but perceive that to assume the title and prerogatives of king, without first obtaining their consent, would be regarded by them as an act of tyranny not to be endured; that those who had hitherto given him their warmest support, would, in this case, be the first to oppose him; and that neither his authority nor his popularity would prevent the fatal effects of so impolitic a measure.

But while he proceeded with caution, in the accomplishment of his object, it is no less certain that he was influenced by ambition. Though he had risen from a slave to be chief of a large body of liberated negroes, he was nevertheless dissatisfied both with his past success and his present elevation; and in aspiring after greater honours, and more extensive authority, he followed the suggestions of a principle, under whose influence he had acted from the commencement of his career.

His conduct must not, however, be wholly ascribed to ambition. Few men had more successfully studied the negro character, or better understood by what means his people could be properly governed, than this chief. Sufficiently disposed to think favourably of his own race, he was nevertheless fully convinced of their instability of character, their aversion

to labour, and their propensity to disorderly conduct. Even their love of liberty, however laudable in itself, would, he perceived, unless restrained within due bounds, utterly unfit them to submit to the mildest and best adapted government that could be formed. The establishment of a monarchy, he considered a safe and effectual remedy for all these evils: it would, he conceived, allow them as much liberty as they could reasonably desire, or were prepared to improve; it would, he hoped, serve to check the growth of those vices to which they were unhappily addicted; and he confidently anticipated that, by the united effect of the freedom it would grant them, and of the salutary restraints it would impose, it would eventually produce a radical change in their whole character and habits. While, therefore, he felt it gratifying to his ambition to be acknowledged their king, he was partly influenced, in aspiring to this honour, by a sincere regard to their interests.

Having thus gained all the honour and authority which the present state of the Island would allow, Christophe appeared to have reached the summit of his ambition, and to have left nothing undone to gratify it, which his prudence and influence could accomplish. From

this period, he steadily kept in view two important objects,—the permanent establishment of his power, and the improvement and prosperity of his subjects. To which of these objects he devoted greatest attention, or for which he was chiefly solicitous, his subsequent proceedings will determine.

VI.

CHRISTOPHE'S SPLENDOUR AND POPULARITY.

SHORTLY after these transactions, a Court Calendar was published, by order of the King, denominated the *Royal Almanack of Hayti*; and containing, among other things of greater or less interest, the names and titles of those, by whose means the monarchy had been principally established.[1] These were men, some of

[1] As there will be occasion for referring to this Almanack hereafter, it may be proper to introduce, in this place, the evidence of its authority. This is contained in a note addressed to the printer, by one of the ministers, which is placed in the commencement of the work, and is as follows:

"*Le Secretaire d'État, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, &c, au Sieur Buon, Directeur de l'Imprimerie Royale.*

"Sa Majesté, Monsieur, voulant donner toute l'autenticité à l'Almanach Royal, m'a commandé de vous fournir les renseignemens nécessaires pour sa composition.

"L'intention de Sa Majesté est que l'Almanach Royal renferme, avec précision, la division et la nomenclature des Autorités, et une analyse exacte de toutes les parties de l'Administration du Royaume.

"Je vous autorise d'imprimer la présente en tête de l'Almanach.

Signé. De Limonade."

whom it will be remembered, had passed the early part of their lives in slavery; and others of them, though never subjected to that state of degradation, had been long regarded as an inferior race: for this reason, it may be amusing, at least, to know by what titles they were now distinguished, and what offices they were destined to fill in the newly-formed government.

The first in order, on the list to which we refer, are the members of the *Royal Family*, whose names, &c, are thus announced:

His Majesty *Henry*, King of Hayti, born the 6th October, 1767, consecrated and crowned at Cape Henry, June 2, 1811; married July 16, 1793, to

Her Majesty *Maria-Louisa*, Queen of Hayti, born May 8, 1778, consecrated and crowned at Cape Henry, June 2, 1811:

From the marriage of their Majesties, His Royal Highness *James-Victor-Henry*, Prince Royal of Hayti, born March 3, 1804:

Her Royal Highness *Frances-Amethiste-Henry*, born May 9, 1798:

Her Royal Highness *Ann-Athenaire-Henry*, born July 7, 1800.

Next follow the *Princes of the blood*, who are thus distinguished:

His Royal Highness *Noele*, Duke of Port-de-Paix, brother to the Queen, born September 10, 1784, married September 22, 1809, to

Her Royal Highness *Celestine-Joseph*, born July 4, 1785 :

Her Royal Highness *Maria-Augustine-Chancey*, widow of the late Prince of Gonaives, &c, born May 15, 1780.

The next in order are the Grand officers of the Kingdom, the Ministers of the four general departments of government, and the Grand Civil officers of the Crown :—

The *Grand officers of the Kingdom* bore the following titles :

His Royal Highness, the *Duke of Port-de-paix*, Grand Marshal of Hayti, General of the Haytian guards ;

His Serene Highness the *Duke du Môle*, Grand Marshal of Hayti, Grand Master of Artillery, General of the *Chasseurs* of the Guard :

His Serene Highness, the *Prince of Limbé*, Grand Marshal of Hayti :

His Grace the *Duke of Fort-Royal*, Marquis of Avalasse, and Grand Marshal of Hayti :

His Grace the *Duke of Plaisance*, Grand Marshal of Hayti :

His Grace the *Duke of Artibonite*, Grand Marshal of Hayti.

The following were the *Ministers* of the Government, with their appropriate titles:

His Serene Highness the *Prince du Limbé*, Minister of War and Marine:

His Excellency the *Count de la Tasse*, Minister of Finance and the Interior:

His Excellency the *Count de Limonade*, Secretary of State, and Minister for Foreign Affairs:

His Excellency the *Count of Terre-Neuve*, Minister of Justice.

Finally, the *Grand Civil officers of the Crown* were,

The most Eminent, and most Reverend *John de Dieu Gonzalles*, Archbishop of Hayti, and Grand Almoner to the King:

His Royal Highness the Duke of *Port-de-Paix*, Grand Cup-bearer:

His Grace the Duke of *Fort-Royal*, Grand Marshal of the Palace:

His Grace the Duke of *Plaisance*, Grand Chamberlain:

Baron de *Monpoint*, Grand Esquire:

His Grace the Duke of *Dondon*, Grand *Veneur:*

Baron de *Sicard*, Grand Master of the Ceremonies.

Such were the members of the Royal Family

of Hayti, the Grand officers of the Kingdom, and the Ministers of the Government. But before we state any thing respecting these officers, ministers, or the Haytian nobility in general, it may be proper to furnish some particulars more immediately relating to their King.

No sooner was Christophe crowned King of Hayti, than he surrounded himself with all the appendages of royalty; and displayed, in the magnificence of his palaces, in the richness of his habiliments, and in his numerous and expensive retinue, all the pomp and splendour of a rich and powerful monarch. Vast sums of money were expended in support of an establishment, such as Hayti had, in no period of its history, ever exhibited. The rich and splendid garments in which the sable monarch occasionally appeared on levee-days, and always on great and important occasions, could hardly be surpassed by those of the most wealthy and powerful rulers of civilized states. His palaces were prepared for his reception with all possible magnificence; the floors of the apartments were made of highly polished mahogany, or of marble; the walls were adorned with the most valuable paintings that could be obtained;

every article of furniture was of the most costly kind; and whatever the most unbounded passion for splendour could suggest, was procured to decorate the habitations of—an uneducated negro.

The number of his *Household,* corresponded with the magnificence of his palaces. This consisted of a Grand Almoner, who was the Archbishop of Hayti; of a Grand Cup-bearer, the first prince of the blood royal; of a Grand Marshal of the royal palace, and a marshal of of his Majesty's apartments; of ten Governors of palaces, and the same number of Governors of Castles; of sixteen chamberlains, with a Grand chamberlain at their head; of five Secretaries and a Librarian; of twelve Knights, fifteen pages with a governor, and seven grand huntsmen; of a Grand Master of the Ceremonies, with three inferior Masters, and five assistants; and of fourteen heralds of the army, seven professors of arts and sciences, together with a great number of physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries.[1]

The "*Maison Militaire du Roi*" was still more numerous and equally expensive. It was

[1] Almanach Royal d'Hayti.

composed of an "*Etat-major general*, of a Commissariat general of troops, of a corps of royal artillery, of a body-guard, of a regiment of grenadiers named the Haytian Guard, and of several corps of light horse and of infantry." With the exception of one or two companies, which were commanded by generals appointed by the King, he was himself *Captain* of the whole. The *Etat major general* consisted of four Lieutenant-generals, three of whom were dukes; of four field-marshals and four major-generals, all barons; of twelve colonels, eight lieutenant-colonels, two captains, one lieutenant, and two generals of the Commissariat. The different corps belonging to the military household were divided, some into two, and others into three, companies; and that of the guards into five brigades. It was also determined that they should be subject to such regulations as were deemed necessary to defend the persons, and to support the dignity, of the king, queen, and the other members of the royal family: that the *Salut de Drapeau* should be given to their majesties only: and that the generals belonging to the different corps should render an account of their proceedings to the king alone, and should acknowledge no other superior.

These, with many other regulations, relating to the manner of carrying and placing standards, and to other matters equally unimportant, were strictly enjoined, and generally observed.[1]

The *Queen's household*, which must not be omitted in this enumeration, consisted of a lady of honour, a lady of the presence, ladies of the palace, a knight of honour, chamberlains, esquires, secretaries, and pages: that also of the prince royal was composed of a governor, preceptor, subpreceptor, chamberlain, &c: and that of the princesses, of two governesses, each of whom was a countess.

The etiquette of the court, levee-days, presentations, and public and private audiences, were further regulated according to prescribed forms. Presentations, in particular, took place on Thursdays, and on such other days as their majesties permitted:—civil and military officers, having first obtained his majesty's permission; and persons nominated to fill the higher offices of the state, or places of trust in the service of the royal household, or any other situation of more than ordinary responsibility, were honoured with presentation by the Minister of the division to which they belonged:—the

[1] Almanach Royal d'Hayti.

different orders of the clergy were presented by the Archbishop:—the ladies of the chief officers, if desirous of being presented to her Majesty, were required to solicit permission of the lady of honour; and were afterwards, if they desired it, presented to the King also:—Persons, holding inferior offices, who came to the palace on public affairs, or were about leaving to return to their duties, might be presented to his Majesty, on their arrival, and at their departure:—all other persons might request presentation; and if their Majesties consented, a day and hour was appointed.

In addition to these regulations respecting presentations, certain days were fixed on for assembling at court; at which times, the nobles composing it were required to repair to the palace in the costume of their profession and rank, accompanied by their wives. On these occasions, no one was permitted to address the king or queen, without having first obtained permission, through the medium of the grand master of the ceremonies. Similar regulations obtained at public audiences; accompanied with this additional caution, that *la bienséance ne permet pas que l'on salue personne devant Leurs Majestés.*

[1] Almanach Royal d'Hayti.

In such state did this untutored chief of the negro kingdom now live; claiming the titles of royalty, assuming its splendour, and demanding from his people that homage which subjects pay to their rightful sovereign. From whatever source were derived the regulations which he, in conjunction with his adherents, thought proper to establish, those relating more directly to himself, displayed much of vanity, much of policy, and much of ambition. He conceived that the manner in which a ruler lives in general, and appears on public occasions, makes a powerful impression on the minds of his people; that nothing could tend more effectually to inspire his own subjects with a proper regard for royalty, than the exhibition of its pomp and splendour; and that from the peculiarity of their character, few things were better calculated to command their respect, and to secure their obedience. But though ambitious at once and politic, there was in his deportment, his general appearance, and the expression of his countenance, something so strongly indicative of a lofty and superior mind, that he seemed destined to stand at the head of a newly-formed kingdom, to regulate its proceedings, and to give permanency to its measures, and vigour to its administration.

One of the most remarkable of Christophe's palaces was built at a place about twelve miles from Cape François, called *Sans Souci,* so named, probably, from the manner in which it was defended by nature. This palace was planned and constructed under his immediate superintendence; and was designed for the purposes of occasional retirement from the cares of the government, of a watching-place whence to observe whatever was going forward in the neighbourhood of the Cape, and of security in case of rebellion among his own subjects, or of invasion by France. It was situated on a lofty mountain, which commanded a view of the capital, and of the country around to the distance of several miles, and with its guard-houses, and other buildings, its gardens and promenades, it occupied a greater part of the summit. In its form it resembled a square, having its grand entrance on one of its sides, leading to a spacious court within, and thence directly or by flights of steps, to all its apartments. In the middle of the court stood a large and wide-spreading tree, under the shadow of which the officers frequently reclined during the more sultry parts of the day; and in the morning and evening, often sat on benches around it, to enjoy the cooling breezes of those seasons.

The palace consisted of two stories, having galleries along the first floor which looked, through glass casements, into the court below; and besides the grand *salon*, the audience-hall, the dining-room, and the library, it had numerous other apartments, occupied by different members of the royal family and household. All these rooms were spacious, lofty, and magnificently furnished: their floors were made of mahogany, the produce of the Island; and their splendid mirrors, superb paintings, and costly furniture, with the other ornaments with which they were decorated, gave to the whole an appearance altogether princely.

Although the atmosphere of this mountain was comparatively cool, a stream of water was conveyed under the building, in various directions, and at length emptied itself into a large bason, prepared for its reception at one extremity of the palace. By this means, all the rooms were kept in a state of refreshing coolness, even during the hottest and most oppressive hours of the day.

Either from policy or from caprice, Christophe caused the windows of this palace to be disproportionately small, to be placed in the most irregular manner, and to be divided into parts as diminutive as they could be conve

niently made. They were at the same time exceedingly numerous; and had they been placed in a more regular order, the exterior would, in this respect, have borne no slight resemblance to an English manufactory.

The gardens behind the palace were laid out with considerable taste: they rose in squares one above another, having marble steps leading from the lowest to the highest, and were planted with an abundant variety of shrubs and flowers. That of the queen, which stood on one side of the mountain, was kept in excellent order; and being consequently more productive than the rest, it presented, when viewed from the palace, the most gay and interesting appearance.

A great part of the ascent to the palace from the valley below, as well as a large flight of steps which led directly to the building, were hewn out of the solid rock. About the middle of the ascent stood a small chapel, which had been built many years before the expulsion of the French, probably by some *religieux*, on account of the entire seclusion of the spot, and its remoteness at that time from all other habitations. Two of its sides were formed by a large rock, adapted by nature to the purpose; and the remaining parts were built of very

large stones, connected together by a cement, so strong as to require considerable force to remove them. Although this chapel did not, in Christophe's opinion, add to the interest of the scene, he nevertheless allowed it to remain.

At the bottom of the mountain, extending along a small valley, was a village, the houses of which, being constructed of bamboo and mortar, and consisting for the most part of only two apartments, exhibited rather the appearance of temporary huts, than that of settled habitations. Their interior, however, was of a different description; for many of them being occupied by officers of the court and of the army, whose attendance on his majesty was occasionally required, these men were careful to provide themselves with handsome furniture, and to decorate their dwellings with considerable taste.

In this retreat Christophe often spent several months of the year; and during these periods of retirement, after attending, in the early part of the day, to such occasional affairs as required his consideration, he would frequently range from one part of the mountain to another, apparently in search of amusement. On these occasions, he was generally accompanied by a select number of his guards, and, what

is not altogether unworthy of observation, by a page carrying in a large damask napkin, the telescope which he used in viewing the different parts of his domains. He also frequently entertained himself with music, of which he was passionately fond; and the most popular martial airs, played by the whole band in the court of the palace, which was usually done towards evening, appeared to afford him the highest gratification. In short, notwithstanding the magnificence of the palace, there was an insupportable dulness and insipidity in the general scene; and than the sounds of musical instruments, said a person who had occasion to reside there during several months, nothing could be more soothing or grateful.

Previously to Christophe's elevation to the throne, his prudence had always rendered him cautious, both with regard to the measures he proposed, and the manner of carrying them into effect; and during the period that he aspired to regal authority, his ambition never betrayed him into any act that tended to diminish his popularity, or to obstruct his advancement. He had invariably professed that he sought not his own aggrandizement, but the welfare of the people; that his sole

object was to place their liberty on a sure and permanent foundation; and that whatever power he might acquire, it should be obtained by merit alone, and be employed for the general good. But whether it were safe to invest him with kingly honours and prerogatives, was a question which remained to be determined: whether, in this case, he would govern with mildness, or rule with tyranny, time alone could decide. The occasional violence of his passions, and the severity of some of his regulations, might perhaps have created just fears among the Haytians respecting his future government; but the conviction of his abilities, and the recollection of his services, effaced from their minds every unfavourable impression; and he commenced his reign in possession of the affections of his people, and with the strongest assurances of their fidelity and obedience.

The high estimation in which he was held, at this early part of his reign, appeared from a circumstance which occurred, during one of his occasional residences at Sans Souci, the place which has been just described. All classes of his subjects had already experienced the benefits of his administration; and as he considered it necessary, during his retirement,

to visit Cape François at stated periods, for the purpose of reviewing the army, and personally inspecting the state of affairs, they thought it due to his merit, as well as becoming their loyalty, to pay him some distinguished mark of their attention and regard. They therefore determined, on his next return, to render his reception suitable to his dignity, and expressive of their attachment to his person, and of their entire satisfaction with his government.

In consequence of this resolution, the people hastened to erect a great number of arches, on the road from the Cape to Sans Souci. These arches they covered with branches of trees, and decorated with garlands, so as to leave just space enough for the king and his retinue to pass. The most splendid of them stood at the entrance of the Cape; its architecture was really chaste; its ornaments, though numerous, were by no means so paltry or gorgeous as the taste of negroes might be supposed to dictate; and on the side facing the road, was the following inscription: *Protecteur de notre liberté, notre Roi, et notre ami, vos sujets vous saluent.*[1]

[1] On his return to Sans Souci, the following inscription was placed on the opposite side: *Père de notre pays! nos régrets vous attendent.*

The time of his return being arrived, there was an entire cessation of business; and immense multitudes collected together, to assist in the proceedings of the day, and to hail the approach of their king. Nor were they forgetful to adorn their persons, and to set off their appearance to the greatest advantage; all hoping to receive some token of their sovereign's favour, and standing in readiness to express their joy, the moment he should appear.

Christophe had been informed of the intentions of his subjects, and of the preparations they had made to welcome his return to the capital; and he had, in consequence, determined on entering it, attended by his family and household. At the appointed hour he quitted his palace, in his state carriage, drawn by six elegant greys, and preceded by a party of the royal guards: at a short distance followed the Queen, in a carriage hardly less splendid than that of her royal consort,—another party of the guards riding on each side: the prince royal, and after him the princesses, succeeded, followed by the princes of the blood and the most distinguished of the nobility, all of them in elegant phaetons: and the remaining part of the guard royal made up the rear. The procession moved slowly onwards, while small

bands of music, placed at different distances, played the most favourite airs; as it advanced, the people gave vent to their feelings, by the most enthusiastic exclamations of joy; and the neighbouring hills resounded with the shouts of *Vive le Roi! La Liberté et l'Independence!*

The scene itself was at once imposing and delightful. Now peaceful and happy, and in possession of their liberty and their rights, they were traversing spots which had witnessed far other scenes,—the ground on which the most tragical deeds had been perpetrated. The ruins of the desolated mansions by which they passed, if they served to remind them of these transactions, reminded them also of the cause in which they had bled, and impressed them more deeply with a grateful sense of their deliverance. They beheld a monarch of their own race, once the companion of their sufferings, now the ruler of their choice, who had hitherto exerted himself in promoting their welfare, returning to take up his residence among them. This lively recollection of their present happy condition contrasted with their former degradation, together with their warm attachment to their chief, and the interesting spectacle they now beheld, could not fail to produce an unusual excitement; and all joined

again in the loud and joyful acclamations of *Vive le Roi! La Liberté et l'Independence!* till the procession reached the borders of the Cape. As it passed under the arch which led to the city, the whole band commenced playing the grand military march: one general burst of applause poured forth from the assembled multitude: at the same instant, the garrison at the battery fired the royal salute; and amidst these gratifying tokens of the affection and fidelity of his subjects, the Haytian monarch entered the capital of his kingdom. He then proceeded to the royal palace, accompanied by his train; and the remainder of the day was spent in mirth and festivity,—the king singularly delighted with this proof of the loyalty of the people; and they rejoicing in the possession of a ruler, whom, while they honoured for his talents, and applauded for his valour, they regarded as their protector and friend.

VII.

THE HAYTIAN NOBILITY,—COURTS OF JUSTICE,—AND CHARACTER OF THE JUDGES.

THE election of the nobility being one of the prerogatives of the crown, Christophe proceeded to select, from among his adherents, persons on whose talents and integrity he might rely, and whom he therefore thought entitled to rank as the nobles of the kingdom; and immediately on his ascending the throne, he bestowed on these men the most pompous titles,[1] distributing them according to their respective merits, or their previous standing in his favour. Thus the Haytians had not only a king, who assumed all the titles, pomp, and prerogatives of royalty; but also dukes, counts, barons, and knights, whom they were required to honour as the dignitaries of the kingdom, and the protectors of their fortunes and their rights. Negroes who, a few years before, were subjected to all the sufferings and degradation of slavery; and

[1] See pp. 124—127.

mulattoes, whose former condition was but a step above that of their black brethren, now demanded to be addressed as their *Royal Highnesses*, their *Serene Highnesses*, their *Graces*, and their *Excellencies*; and required from those who entered their presence, that respect and deference which men of rank and influence are accustomed to demand from their inferiors. Whatever may be thought of Christophe's bestowing these titles on the more distinguished part of his followers, the circumstance cannot but appear, at first sight at least, somewhat absurd and ludicrous; and whether it arose from prejudice, or from any other feeling, Englishmen especially felt a reluctance to address a negro as his *Lordship*, or a mulatto as his *Grace*, which neither custom nor constraint could overcome.

In the selection of his nobility, Christophe was influenced by different motives. All those to whom he could trace any degree of relationship, whether by his own side, or that of the Queen, he appointed to the highest offices in the state, and enriched with some of the best plantations in the Island. Like himself, they had been slaves, had engaged in the contest for liberty, and were uneducated: but one or two of them had risen above the disadvantages

of their original condition, and had, on some occasions, displayed considerable skill in the arts both of government and of war. Such in particular was the character of *Noele*, the Queen's brother. He was Duke of Port-de-paix, Grand Marshal of the kingdom, General of the Haytian Guards, and Grand Cup-bearer to the King. In addition to his military talents, he was said to be distinguished for his prudence in council, and for his firmness and perseverance in action;—qualities which, however valuable and important, are seldom found to unite in a negro.

In selecting the rest of his nobility, Christophe was careful to guard against those individuals, however few, who either opposed his measures, or evinced a disposition to create discontent among the people; and whatever their abilities or services, he excluded them from all offices of importance, and deprived them of the influence they had previously acquired. On the other hand, those who united to their talents a steady attachment to his person and cause, had already received numerous proofs of his favour, and obtained the chief offices in the civil and military departments: on this account, their present elevation, as the nobles of the kingdom,

consisted in little more, than attaching to their names the titles which their sovereign thought proper to confer. They received no increase of authority, nor of wealth; for Christophe was too fond of power, to commit more of it than his purposes rendered essentially necessary, even to the most confidential of his men; and too eager after riches, to bestow them uncalled for on others. At the same time, their previous income, which arose partly from their estates, and partly from the emoluments of their offices, he considered sufficient to enable them to support the rank to which they were now elevated.

From these sources, indeed, the Haytian nobility derived greater wealth than many proprietors, under the French government, ever possessed; and they were not backward to expend it in supporting an establishment, such as they thought became the dignity of their order, and the high and responsible situations which they held in the government. In imitation of their sovereign, they decorated their habitations with every variety of ornament; they procured the most splendid equipage of carriages, phaetons, and other vehicles; and they supplied their attendants with the most expensive liveries, of the most gorgeous colours. Their tables were said to be

furnished with a profusion of viands, and of rare and costly wines; and their entertainments on fête days, and on other special occasions, were hardly less splendid than those given by their royal master.

In addition to their other honours, the majority of them were elected members of the *Royal and Military Order of St. Henry*; an order of Knighthood created by Christophe shortly after his coronation. It was composed of the King, under the title of Grand Master and Founder;—of the prince royal, and the other sons of His Majesty;—of sixteen officers of the Grand Cross;—of thirty-two Commandants; and of as many knights as the King should think proper to admit. It was endowed with 300,000 livres per annum; which sum was divided among its members, according to their rank, with the exception of 8,000 livres, employed in the purchase of crosses, and in defraying other annual expences. The cross of the order was of gold, enamelled with the *lapis lazuli*; and had, on one side, the image of St. Henry, with this inscription: *Henri, Fondateur*, 1811; and on the other, a crown of laurels with a star, and the following motto: *Prix de la valeur*.[1]

[1] The manner in which the cross was worn, differed according to the rank of the members of the order. The

But while the nobility lived in great splendour, and received from their inferiors the respect due to their rank, they were subject to restraints imposed on them by their sovereign, calculated to repress their vanity, and to create dissatisfaction. Their constant attendance at court, and the etiquette they were required to observe, because foreign to their previous freedom and familiarity of manners, the majority of them found intolerably disagreeable and burdensome; and provided they could have retained a moderate portion of their income, many of them would have cheerfully abandoned their empty titles, to be enabled to live in a manner more congenial with their views of liberty, and more agreeable to their settled habits. The errors into which they

superior officers of the state wore it attached to a *black* mohair ribbon, placed from right to left, in the form of a scarf; or embroidered with gold, on the left side of the coat: Commandants wore it attached to a *red* mohair ribbon, placed as a scarf, from left to right: and the chevaliers fastened it to the button-hole of the coat, with a short piece of Haytian colour ribbon. *Le Roi, le prince royal, et autres fils du roi, seuls portaient indistincement la croix, soit en collier, soit on écharpe, soit à la bontonnière de leurs habits. (Almanach royal d'Hayti.)*—Of course these knights no longer exist as such: for *St. Henry* has been struck out of the Haytian calendar, and the *order* has shared the fate of its founder.

often fell in point of court etiquette, though sometimes of such a nature as to cause his majesty to join in the momentary merriment they occasioned, were more frequently attended by his displeasure, and punished with open rebuke. Nor was it long ere they began to feel that, however usefully Christophe might employ the authority entrusted to him, in promoting the general welfare; their influence in the government would at all times be confined within the most narrow limits; and to fear that, as the regulation which ordained that 'their titles, and the offices and emoluments connected with them, should be held for life,' might be suspended, and even wholly set aside, at the will of their sovereign, the limited authority they possessed would be equally precarious.

They were, however, vain of their rank, and puffed up with an idea of their imaginary importance; and though they generally behaved towards their inferiors with great familiarity, they sometimes treated them with most unprovoked insolence: they therefore required to be kept under proper restraints, lest the increasing pride of some should render them ungovernable; and the turbulence of others, interrupt the peace, or endanger the security, of

the state. But in imposing these restraints, Christophe did not act with his accustomed prudence; but rendered them more numerous and more rigorous, than either the follies of the nobles, or his own safety, demanded. He acted with equal impolicy, not to say injustice, in inflicting punishments too frequently for minor offences; and in chastizing them with undue severity for the most trifling neglect of duty, without regard to their rank or their services.

As an instance of the manner in which Christophe proceeded, in order to keep the nobility in awe, the case of the duke de Marmalade may be stated. This man, who was one of the most active and intelligent negroes in the Haytian court, was on one occasion charged with an important commission, and instructed in the manner of accomplishing it. He had no sooner entered on the business, than he found that it might be more effectually and satisfactorily executed, by varying in a few points from his master's instructions; and either from inability or neglect, he ventured to do so, without previously obtaining his consent. Though he faithfully discharged the duty assigned to him, his omitting to follow the prescribed directions in every particular, excited his majesty's highest displeasure; and he

was instantly ordered to quit the palace, to leave the Cape the following morning, and to take up his abode in the citadel. Notwithstanding his being a duke, a member of the privy council, a knight of the order of St. Henry, and a general in the army, he was here compelled to associate with the workmen, and even to assist in their labour; nor was he permitted to return till some months after, when his majesty thought proper to release him from his confinement, and to restore him to his rank and office.—This circumstance however, it should be remarked, occurred in the latter part of Christophe's reign.

The necessity of placing the Haytian nobles under salutary restraints, and the readiness of their sovereign to impose them, were so many proofs of the danger attending the elevation of men above their original sphere, and investing them with greater authority than they have been accustomed to exercise. But however numerous their defects, the abilities of those appointed to fill the higher departments of the state, must neither be overlooked nor forgotten. It cannot, indeed, be supposed, that the affairs of a small kingdom, just rising into existence,

without alliance or connexion with other powers, would require the qualifications of European statesmen, or be likely to furnish men endowed with them. Yet to discharge, with ability, such duties as devolved on the principal officers of the government, demanded greater talents than we are accustomed to look for among a people, consisting of half-civilized negroes, and of mulattoes for the most part without education and without experience.

The negro part of the nobility, indeed, though raised to the highest rank, and honoured with the most numerous and imposing titles, could not furnish many so gifted by nature, as to be qualified for duties so arduous and important. But among the mulattoes some were found, whose talents and acquirements would not have disgraced men of greater importance and celebrity. Through their ability, industry, and activity, the affairs of the kingdom were conducted with the utmost regularity and despatch; and in conjunction with the vigour and firmness of Christophe's administration, their zeal for the stability of the government and the improvement of the people, and their perseverance in carrying the most difficult plans into effect, contributed not a little to introduce that order and subordination

among all classes, which now began to appear. The most distinguished of these men, during a considerable part of Christophe's reign, were the duke de Limonade, secretary of state, and minister for foreign affairs; and baron de Dupuy, his majesty's interpreting secretary; a brief notice of whom may not be wholly uninteresting.

The duke *de Limonade*, being minister for foreign affairs, had more frequent intercourse with Europeans, and was better known to them, than either of the other ministers. He was a mild, inoffensive man; agreeable in his manners, and free from the loquacity so common among his fellow-officers. He had been educated in France; and in point of general knowledge, was not inferior to the best informed men connected with Christophe. His talents however were not of that order which excite instant admiration; and till he was intimately known, he appeared little qualified to act the part, either of a soldier or a statesman. His superiority then became evident; and while he attended to the duties of his office with unwearied assiduity, he displayed, in all his engagements, the strictest integrity of character. He was sometimes selected to draw up such proclamations and manifestos as

the king deemed it necessary to publish; and in these documents, he evinced an ease and correctness of composition, an accuracy of narration, and a justness of sentiment, equally creditable to his understanding and to his heart. His chief defect consisted in a want of energy, which arose from a natural indolence of disposition, or from being less ambitious than others. Not that he was insensible to the value of liberty, or indifferent to its permanent establishment. No man felt more sincerely anxious for its interests, nor more ready, if necessary, to engage in its defence. He was no less solicitous for the improvement of the people, in all the arts of civilized life; and laboured with unwearied application, to promote their safety and welfare. He was, at the same time, strongly attached to the cause of Christophe, in opposition to that of Petion; on which account, chiefly, he stood higher in the favour of his master, than the majority of those who held offices in the government. Free also, in a great measure, from the vices which prevailed among them, the correctness of his deportment thus corresponded with the integrity of his principles. Instead of being, like many others, haughty and overbearing towards the people, he was condescending and courteous

to all; and while his talents and services gained him the favour of the king, and the respect of the nobility, the tenour of his conduct procured him general esteem, and every one spoke in his praise.

Dupuy was a young man at the period of the last and successful struggle for emancipation; and feeling the justice of the claims both of the negroes and mulattoes, he engaged on the side of liberty, determined on obtaining his rights. But although neither defective in courage, nor wanting in zeal and activity, he was far less successful than others; and at the close of the contest, was only a subaltern officer, with little pay, and less influence;—an insufficient reward, he thought, for the services which he had rendered to the common cause. Disappointed in his hopes of distinction, and thoroughly detesting Dessalines, for his injustice towards him, and his cruelty towards others; he determined to quit his native Island, and to settle in America;—there to try his fortune anew, not as a soldier, but as a merchant. By his activity, industry, and economy, he acquired in a few years a fortune sufficient to enable him either to retire from business, or to engage in speculations more extensive than any on which he had previously ventured.

While hesitating in what manner to proceed, he received from his friends an account of the flourishing state of St. Domingo under Christophe, which fully confirmed what he had previously heard of the character of the king, and the condition of the people; and seeing nothing to prevent his return to the Island, he relinquished his mercantile pursuits, and sailed for Cape François. Christophe had known him before his departure for America; and hearing from others that his abilities were respectable, and that his former exertions had never been rewarded, he placed him in some office immediately on his arrival, and promised him future promotion; nor was it long after his return that he raised him to the rank of a baron, and made him his interpreting secretary.

The friends of Dupuy were perfectly correct in stating that his abilities were of a superior order. He was active in the despatch of business, and prepared to unravel the difficulties of affairs the most intricate and perplexing. His information, especially on subjects of history and politics, was considerable; his shrewdness and penetration were alone sufficient to raise him in the estimation of the nobles; and his unwearied attention to the duties of his office, procured him the constant

favour of his master, and repeated assurances of further promotion. In some particular instances, however, his conduct cannot merit unqualified approbation; for though sincerely devoted to the welfare of his country, he considered that his first object was his own interest; the next, that of Christophe; and he conceived that to promote either, directly, or indirectly, it was unnecessary to be over scrupulous respecting the means. Yet Dupuy deserves to be remembered for his attention to the English residents, and for his readiness to serve them on all occasions. He often joined in their parties; and his manners and conversation were sufficiently interesting and intelligent, to render him at all times an agreeable companion.[1]

The establishment of an order of nobility, the election of its members, and the determination of its privileges, formed but a small portion of the engagements which now occupied the attention of the Haytian monarch.

[1] Since the death of Christophe, Dupuy has again become a merchant; and though he may not hereafter hold a conspicuous station in the Haytian republic, the former English residents of Cape François will always remember him with kindness, and rejoice to hear of his prosperity.

One of the first and most important objects was, to place the kingdom in a state of defence: another was to provide laws for the prevention of crime, and the establishment of order and subordination among the people; and while due attention was given to the former, various steps were taken, from time to time, to promote the latter.

Of the laws enacted for this purpose, I have at present but a general recollection; and were I in possession of the code which Christophe, with the assistance of his council, drew up, it would not consist with the brevity of these sketches, to notice any thing more than its general spirit and tendency.[1] The laws of which it was composed, were, for the most part, copied from the civil and criminal codes of England and France;—some of them, in consequence, appeared little suited to the state of the Haytians: but such as related to property, to the manner of determining disputes, and the punishments to be inflicted for minor offences, were well adapted to answer

[1] I have unfortunately mislaid a document containing some important particulars respecting the laws of Hayti, and the civil department generally; which, after a long and fruitless search, I now despair of finding.

the purposes for which they were intended. Those founded on the peculiar condition and circumstances of the people, were enacted at different periods, according as circumstances rendered them necessary. They were either provisional or permanent; and were, in many instances, so severe, that to a people in a more advanced state of civilization than the Haytians, they would have been an infringement on their liberties, which would have justified the strongest opposition. But the negroes of St. Domingo, from their previous habits, their present opinions, and their prevailing inclinations, required the strong hand of power, and the restraints of severe but salutary laws, in order to the accomplishment of any plan which might be proposed to promote their improvement. The strongest objection to these laws was, that they were formed and enacted, without consulting the opinions or wishes of the people; and in the latter part of Christophe's reign, even without the concurrence of his council.

In order to ensure the due observance of the laws, courts of justice were established, and judges regularly appointed.[1] The first of these courts was, on account of its superior powers,

[1] Almanach Royal d'Hayti.

denominated *La Cour Souveraine*. It was composed of a president, a vice-president, a procureur-general of the King, an attorney-general, a procureur, seven counsellors, three assistant counsellors, and a chief secretary. Its province was to determine all contestations and trials, both civil and criminal, on appeals from the sentences of the inferior courts. But its decisions might be confirmed or annulled by the great council of state, whenever the King deemed the business of sufficient importance for convening it. This court assembled every fortnight, and sat during the succeeding week. It also held audiences and sittings extraordinary, according to the nature and importance of the affairs brought under its consideration.

Next to the sovereign court, were the *Senechaussées*, of which ten were established in different parts of Christophe's dominions; each extending its authority over the neighbouring towns and villages. The judges of the *Senechaussées* took cognizance of all civil and criminal processes, and of all other causes within the limits of their jurisdiction.

At the seat of each Senechaussée was established a *Court of Admiralty*, composed of a counsellor, a lieutenant judge, and a king's procureur, with their secretaries; which court took

cognizance of all actions and litigations between merchants and tradespeople, and native and foreign speculators; of all transactions relative to commerce, by sea or land; and of all matters respecting sales, purchases, or other contracts, connected with navigation. —Finally, each parish was provided with a lieutenant judge, a substitute, and a secretary; the first of whom filled the office of *ci-devant* Juge-de-paix; kept the registers of births, marriages, and deaths; and determined minor cases of dispute among the inhabitants of their respective districts.

To fill the various departments of these courts, it required a considerable number of men, distinguished for their penetration, their intelligence, and their adherence to justice. But although some of this character were found, who in consequence were promoted to the higher stations of the government, it was difficult to select, from among a people lately delivered from the shackles of slavery, a sufficient number duly qualified to fill offices of so much weight and responsibility. Those appointed were, for the most part, totally uneducated; a disadvantage which could not fail to draw after it many unhappy conse-

quences. Nor were the majority distinguished either for their discernment, or their ability in judging between right and wrong. Cases were often brought before them, which, however easily determined by those acquainted with the principles of justice and equity, puzzled men who, being but imperfectly acquainted with their own laws, had little to guide them in their decisions but a few common-place maxims, some of which were false, and others confined in their application. The most important places in the kingdom were not always properly provided; for at Cape François, one of the Judges was a boisterous, illiterate negro, who, some years before, had acted in the less dignified capacity of a cook, on board an American ship which traded to the Island. In consequence of the inability of these men, the resident Europeans and Americans seldom thought of referring their differences to the courts of justice for decision; but determined them by the more simple, and, under these circumstances, the safer method of arbitration.

The ignorance of the civil officers was accompanied with no small degree of pride and vanity. Whether engaged or not in their official duties, they never appeared in public without

being habited in the dress peculiar to their order; or if they held a higher rank in the army, which was sometimes the case, arrayed in their more splendid military attire. They assumed an air of the utmost importance; and evinced, by their attitudes, their haughty mode of speaking, and the confident manner in which they settled disputes, the high notions they entertained of their abilities and office. Proud of their dignity, yet imperfectly instructed in the extent of their authority, they officiously interfered in matters in which they had no concern; or busied themselves in things too trivial to require their notice. They demanded the utmost respect to be paid to their opinions, even on subjects in no way connected with their office; and on those which fell within their province, they were too tenacious of their dignity to suffer a suggestion from another, which did not perfectly correspond with their own views. And if any were remiss in paying them all the deference they claimed,—and of this, men accustomed to regard them, in all respects, as their equals, might often be guilty, —they failed not to remind them of their neglect, in the most reprehensible terms.

While the judges, in general, laboured under these disadvantages, such as were negroes

evinced an undue partiality towards their sable brethren; insomuch that when a dispute between a mulatto and a black was referred to their decision, they generally determined the question in favour of the latter. Nor were they free from the charge of bribery: for whether blacks or mulattoes, few of them could resist the offer of a valuable present, or submit, in such cases, to be guided by the evident principles of justice. In causes of great importance alone, did they invariably proceed with equity; for then, either feeling the baseness of injustice, or dreading the consequences of discovery, they appeared to act uninfluenced by partiality or bribes; and the moment the charge of any notorious crime was fully substantiated against a prisoner, they pronounced the sentence of the law, without respect to colour or rank.

Their method of proceeding in the different courts, varied according to the nature of the causes, and the qualifications of the judges. Those appointed to the higher courts, to whom it belonged especially to try criminal causes, conducted them in a regular, systematic, and impartial manner. They directed the prisoner to be arraigned at the bar; they strictly examined the witnesses of the crime with which

he stood charged; they then carefully weighed the evidence produced, and pronounced the sentence of acquittal or condemnation accordingly. But in the inferior courts, where cases of dispute and petty offences were tried, the judges proceeded in a manner more irregular and summary: they required the accused party to be brought before them; heard his explanation or defence; and frequently without examining witnesses, or taking any further means of ascertaining the truth, they gravely pronounced their decision. Nor were they more careful in determining actions or contests relating to business or commerce; for though they sometimes settled these disputes to the satisfaction of the parties, they more frequently examined them with great indifference, and decided them with equal injustice.

But whenever instances of this nature occurred, redress might be obtained, by appealing to the higher courts, or to Christophe himself. Among others, an American, while transacting business at Gonaives, found this step necessary and successful. He had engaged to purchase a certain quantity of coffee of one of the more opulent negroes, and had agreed to give ready money for a part, and to pay for the remainder at a stated period. The negro having

received the money, soon after refused to deliver the coffee for which it was given; and so obstinately did he persist in his dishonesty, that the American was obliged to refer the business to the *Juges-de-Paix* of that district. But they had been previously prejudiced in the negro's favour, either by his false statement, or by his bribing them with a part of the money; and notwithstanding his evident dishonesty, they acquitted him. The injured American proceeded immediately to Cape François, where Christophe was then residing; who, on hearing the case, commanded the dishonest negro to return the money, and severely punished him and the judges.

Such was the condition of the Haytians, that men of superior qualifications could seldom be found among them. Christophe, however, did every thing in his power to remedy the defects which existed in this important branch of the administration. In order to cause every question which required the interference of the judges, to be determined with justice and equity, he sometimes examined them himself; strictly questioned them respecting their proceedings, and the manner in which they decided the causes brought before them; and invariably removed from their office, those whom

he discovered to have acted unjustly; and if their offence deserved it, degraded them also from the rank which they held in the army. Instances of notorious injustice, he failed not to punish with the greatest severity: hence the judges concerned in the affair of the American, he first deprived of their office, next degraded them in a public manner,—and then commanded them to proceed to the mountain on which the citadel was building, to give such assistance as they were able, in the improvements and fortifications then going forward.[1]

In the meantime, the establishment of courts of justice, notwithstanding the defects of the civil officers, was necessarily productive of many beneficial results. By their means it was, that due punishment was inflicted on those guilty of evident injustice and oppression: that as far as the fear of suffering and disgrace operated, so far were unprin-

[1] Another circumstance connected with the punishment of these men was said to have taken place, but whether correctly or not, I am unable to determine. It was stated, that Christophe caused them to sit round a room in his palace, and directed water to be poured on their heads till they were thoroughly drenched, frequently asking them, during this singular process, in the most sarcastic manner, *if their heads were yet cool?*

cipled and turbulent men restrained from the commission of crimes: that open dishonesty seldom failed to be detected, and never escaped its just punishment: that injuries of the person wantonly inflicted always met with their desert: that the unhappy effects of private revenge were prevented: and that crimes affecting the general safety were rendered less frequent. Thus, however numerous the defects which existed in the civil department, the administration of justice, nevertheless, tended gradually to suppress those evils which prevailed among the people, and to promote among all classes, that order, without which no society can exist.

VIII.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE HAYTIAN ARMY,—AND DEFENCE OF THE ISLAND.

Some time after Christophe was declared king of Hayti, when the nature of his proceedings, and the mode of his administration, became known, it was questioned by many, especially by some French writers, whether his government was in reality a limited monarchy, or a military government. One of them,[1] indeed, asserted that 'the name of monarchy could not be given to the Haytian government, because the military authority was the law of the Island.' The Haytians however contended that if military authority occasionally predominated in Hayti over the civil, it could not, nor it ought not, to be attributed to any other cause than their perpetual fear of the designs of France;—that, nevertheless, the government was, by the nature of the constitution, and the distribution of power, a monarchy

[1] M. le Borgne de Boigne,

essentially limited;—that to the immortal and venerable code, (so they denominated the Haytian code,) which bore the name of their august sovereign, were subject all the powers, civil, administrative, and military; that even the king neither thought himself, nor desired to place himself, above the laws, of which he was the legislator, the defender, and the most firm supporter;—and that if ever the military law predominated in public affairs, it was only under circumstances of extreme danger, when the country, menaced by a powerful foe, demanded the most prompt measures for its peace and safety.

However this question be determined, the probability that the French would renew their attacks on the Haytians, and strenuously exert themselves to recover their most valuable colony, was a sufficient motive for both chiefs to stand in constant readiness to defend themselves. They might rest assured that that people, continuing to assert their right to the Island, and positively rejecting its claims to independence, could never contemplate its loss, without secretly resolving on its re-conquest; and they might consider it equally certain that the ex-colonists, enraged by the recollection of their losses, and stimulated by the

desire of revenge, would never cease urging the government to undertake it. For this reason, as well as for the purpose of defending himself against the stratagems of his rival, Christophe deemed it necessary to maintain a standing army.

His exact military force, however, cannot be determined with any great degree of certainty. The soldiers being scattered over different parts of his territories, were seldom, if ever, collected together; so that it was impossible to form any probable opinion of their number, by personal observation. The statements published by order of the king, were either expressed in terms too general to convey any accurate idea respecting it, or more frequently too exaggerated to admit of belief. The answers of his officers also, when questioned on the subject, were generally evasive, often contradictory, and sometimes even absurd. One of them seriously assured me that the standing force amounted to no less than 100,000 men. But Christophe, it appeared, conceived that policy required him to send forth exaggerated accounts of the number of his soldiers: he hoped, by this means, to deceive and intimidate his rival; and to induce France, if not to abandon her hostile intentions, yet to delay the

execution of them. From the probability of the case, however, and from the prevailing opinion of the whites who had long resided in the Island, it may be inferred that the number of his forces might amount to fifteen or twenty thousand men.

Notwithstanding that the Haytian soldiers had been long accustomed to war, there was still great room for improvement in general discipline; and especially in point of due subordination to their officers. When they first attempted to recover their liberty, they were utterly ignorant of arms, and destitute in a great measure of leaders; they rushed into the conflict without order, and heedlessly precipitating themselves on the cannon of the enemy, thousands of them thus perished, victims of their own fierceness and temerity. During the contest which ensued on the attempt of France to re-enslave the Haytians, they were compelled, by the superior forces employed against them, to confine themselves to one single mode of warfare: and thus that struggle, however desperate, contributed but imperfectly to their knowledge of the art of war. And though they had derived, from the subsequent dissensions of the rival chiefs, considerable improvement in arms, they were

still extremely defective in that regularity, subordination, and facility of evolution, which distinguish well-trained, and properly disciplined troops. At the same time, many of those lately enlisted into the army, being young, had seen little service, and were unaccustomed to that subjection, to which, as soldiers, they were now obliged to submit. It was therefore necessary to establish regulations, by which to improve their discipline, and to render them more orderly in their conduct, and more submissive to their officers; and Christophe, having made such provision as he was able, for the prevention of crime and the establishment of order among the people, now applied himself to this object with his accustomed vigour and ability.

His forces were already formed into the usual division of artillery, infantry, and cavalry. The artillery consisted of three regiments, having at its head one of the dukes of the kingdom. The infantry was composed of thirty-two regiments, each of which was divided into three battalions, and was designated by the name of some distinguished person or place;—and the cavalry also consisted of the same number of regiments, denominated the regiments of the king, the queen, and the

prince royal, each of which was divided into as many squadrons. The prince royal was appointed generalissimo of the whole army, and was assisted by six grand marshals, eight lieutenant-generals, fifteen field marshals, and six major-generals.[1]

By constant practice, Christophe proposed to render his soldiers more expert in every military exercise; and hoped, by rigid discipline, to establish perfect order and subordination among them. In conformity with this plan, the different regiments of the army were frequently led forth to the field; and besides being carefully inspected by officers especially appointed by the king, they occasionally underwent a general review. Those to whom the duty of inspecting the troops was assigned, were men of known valour and experience; who, having distinguished themselves in time of war, by their knowledge of the military art, and during this period of tranquillity, by their solicitude for the improvement of the army, were well qualified to undertake so important an office; and in attending to the discipline of the troops, in providing for the military hospitals, and in enforcing the appointed regulations, they

[1] Almanach Royal d'Hayti.

displayed a degree of diligence, prudence, and firmness, seldom observed among negroes. Whenever any considerable part of the army was reviewed, Christophe attended in person; and on these occasions he appeared to the utmost advantage. Though habited in the usual military uniform, his general appearance and size, the intelligent and dignified expression of his countenance, and his corresponding attitude, readily distinguished him from all his officers; and while he was occupied in observing the troops, in detecting the irregularities of their movements, and in marking what improvement they had made, a spectator gradually became unconscious of his origin and race, and could not help regarding him as a perfect general, and a distinguished hero. The regiments which were reviewed, presented also a sight at once novel and striking; and the superior state of their dress and their arms, their readiness and regularity in obeying the word of command, and the facility with which they performed their various manœuvres, connected with the circumstance of their being negroes, rendered the whole a spectacle the most interesting in its kind that can be witnessed.

In the meantime, suitable regulations were

established for the purpose of encouraging a spirit of emulation among the soldiers, and of subduing that disposition to insubordination and violence which occasionally displayed itself. The reward appointed for good conduct especially when associated with some evidence of natural talent, was promotion in the civil or military department, accompanied with a proportionate increase of emolument. The punishment decreed for disorderly behaviour, and particularly for intemperance, neglect of duty, or disobedience towards officers, was either temporary imprisonment, a scanty allowance of food, or, as in cases of extreme delinquency, severe corporeal chastisement. But if it required great firmness, in maintaining military discipline in general, it demanded equal discretion and judgment, in inflicting punishment on offenders. For though the fear it inspired, served to check the spirits of the refractory and disobedient; its too frequent infliction was calculated to render them still more turbulent and unruly. Whenever a Haytian was imprisoned, whatever might be the cause, besides feeling it the greatest infringement on his liberty, he regarded it as the greatest disgrace: Nor could he be deprived of his usual portion of food,

without considering it as a mode of treatment equally severe, to be borne with equal impatience: and to submit to corporeal punishment, which reminded him so powerfully of the lash of the slave-driver, he felt as an indignity too great to be endured. For this reason, to have inflicted punishment with undue severity, especially for minor offences, would have defeated the object it was designed to promote.

But the subordination which at length prevailed throughout the army, sufficiently proved the suitableness of the military regulations, and the firmness and prudence of those by whom they were enforced. For though the soldiers were disposed, by their opinions and habits, to throw off every restraint; so wisely and effectually was discipline maintained, that in their order and regularity, their submission to their officers, and their observance of the laws, they could be exceeded only by the best trained armies of Europe.

While they were distinguished for their peaceable conduct in general, they were no less remarkable for their respectful behaviour towards the whites, and their readiness to oblige them on every occasion;—a trait in their character deserving particular notice. They

had been taught to consider the French as the enemies of their race, and as soldiers, had assisted to expel or destroy them; and had they been led, from this circumstance, to cherish an unconquerable hatred towards white men, without distinction of nation or character, it would not have been in the least surprising. Yet the Haytian soldiers were so far from entertaining this indiscriminate aversion, that they were anxious to show to all whites, (the French alone excepted,) the utmost attention and respect.

The majority of the officers were, if possible, still more friendly and complaisant; and even sought opportunities to show towards the English especially, their readiness to serve them. One of them whom I occasionally met, appeared especially anxious to cultivate an acquaintance with the British residents; for England, he was assured, felt a sincere and lasting interest in the welfare of negroes. He was a black far advanced in age, interesting in his manners, and intelligent in his conversation, and bore, in his appearance, proofs of the difficult service in which his life had been spent. But a circumstance connected with his eventful history, will serve to give some idea of his character, as well as of the times in which it

occurred; and though it relates to an early period, it may not be the less interesting.

During the period of this man's slavery, his master was an aged planter, possessed of large estates, and of a considerable number of negroes;—he was also one of those who treated them with lenity, and endeavoured to mitigate the rigours of their bondage. Towards this negro he always acted with singular kindness; he frequently bestowed favours upon him seldom conferred upon slaves, and even promised to liberate him, provided his conduct should appear to merit it. This treatment, so kind and so unusual, inspired the negro with the strongest attachment to his master, and made him resolve that, should he obtain his freedom, he would remain in the service of his benefactor for life.

During the ravages which attended the early insurrections, this planter, among others, was called to witness the destruction of his estates, in which some of his own slaves ungratefully assisted; and at length perceived that, with the loss of his property, and the dispersion of his negroes, even his life was no longer in safety. He had however the consolation to know that one faithful attendant still adhered to his cause, who though unable to protect him from the

violence of the insurgents, was determined to defend his life at the risk of his own. During these troublous times, neither age, nor respectability, nor past kindness, gave any security to the planters; and one evening a party of negroes, armed with bludgeons, and threatening vengeance on every white who should fall into their hands, forced their way into the apartment of the aged planter, and having robbed him of his money, were about to put an end to his life. But his faithful slave was fortunately in the house, and entering the apartment at this instant, snatched the bludgeon from the savage who appeared the leader of the band, levelled a blow at his head, and the next moment beheld him a corpse at his feet. This determined resistance intimidated the rest of the party; and they instantly retreated, having first seized all the provisions they could find, and afterwards set fire to the house.

But this negro's situation soon became one of extreme danger;—the French were already seizing the slaves, and putting them to death on the slightest suspicion; and the insurgents, whose rage this impolicy heightened, laid violent hands on all who hesitated to join in their proceedings. Under these circumstances he was compelled to quit his master, and from

necessity, to join the revolters. Yet though he had left his benefactor for a while, he did not forget him. He conveyed him to a place where he hoped he might remain concealed in safety: he visited him every night; he brought him the best food he could procure; and when he could obtain no other, generously gave him his own. In this retreat the planter remained, unmolested and undiscovered, above a week. At length a party of negroes, in search of provision or money, broke into the place; and when they found only an unprotected old man, their disappointment, added to their previous rage, rendered them insensible to every feeling of humanity, and they instantly prepared to despatch him. He begged them, by all that was generous and brave, to spare his life: he reminded them how little his death could avail their cause; he promised to deliver up the remains of his property, would they but allow him to escape. But they were too hardened and enraged to listen to his entreaties; they fell on him with their swords; they beat and wounded him with the utmost wantonness and barbarity; and then left him for dead.

On the return of his faithful negro at night, the spark of life was not quite extinguished: the unfortunate sufferer had still

sufficient strength to enable him to relate the circumstances of his discovery, and the barbarous manner in which he had been treated: he then thanked his attendant for his generous conduct, recommended him to the protection of providence, and begged him to quit the place, to provide for his own safety; and having made this last effort, by which his strength was exhausted, he soon fell into the agonies of death. Though "skins may differ," yet "affection dwells in whites and blacks the same;" and the negro, notwithstanding the charge of his dying master, would not abandon, in nature's last moment, the man who had treated him with kindness. He seated himself at his side; he wiped from his face the blood which besmeared it; he watched the faint glimmering of life's last spark, while he bitterly deplored the fate of one he loved so well. Long and difficult was the struggle of the dying old man; again and again he endeavoured to fix his eye on his faithful negro, to intimate that in death, he was not unmindful of his generosity. "That night," said the old officer, while the big tear rolled down his sable cheek—"that night I shall never, never forget. I thought of my master's kindness, and felt I could have sacrificed my life to save him: I beheld him pale

as a spectre; the blood still running from his wounds; his eye fixed in death: I recollected that this was only one of the numerous and horrid massacres which were daily perpetrated: my grief was inexpressible, and my soul chilled with horror. I could not speak: I could not weep: I could only give utterance to my agonizing feelings by occasional sighs and groans."

Day was already approaching, when the old planter expired. But the negro determined, at the risk of discovery, to pay the last token of respect to the remains of his master; and having cleansed the body from the gore which covered it, and wrapped it in a mantle, he hastily dug a grave, where he interred it, unseen by any of his comrades. "And think not," said the veteran, in closing his tale, "that every black who took part in the proceedings of that period, was alike inhuman and savage. In tracing the progress of that terrible contest, I have one consolation, independent of its successful result; and that is, that I firmly and unceasingly refused to stain my hands unnecessarily in blood; and sometimes prevailed, by my entreaties, on the more desperate of my companions, to follow my example: and though liberty is a treasure, in defence of

which I would cheerfully employ my remaining strength, never may it be necessary to protect it, by means so terrible and sanguinary!"

The honour, generosity, and bravery, which appeared in this veteran negro, were more or less conspicuous among the majority of his fellow officers. As men holding official situations, they had merited, by their services, the rank to which they had been promoted; and by their subsequent conduct, continued to prove themselves worthy of it. Though, for the most part, uneducated, their conversation was occasionally intelligent; and while they were held in high repute in the army, they were no less respected in private life. The rest of them, however, were of a totally different character; and afforded to the soldiers an example, calculated to produce the most pernicious effects. These men were not only haughty and overbearing towards their inferiors, and inclined to exceed the limits of their authority; but were also addicted to many vicious and abandoned practices. They were careful to attend to their military duty, lest they should be degraded; but having frequent leisure and liberal pay, they indulged in the greatest intemperance, and in a licentiousness

almost unbounded. As some of them possessed considerable influence, it was desirable occasionally to secure their good offices; and this might always be done by inviting them to an entertainment, and furnishing them with a plentiful table. But their acquaintance soon became a burden; for after their introductory visit, they often intruded themselves when it was neither desirable nor pleasant; and by their excessive intemperance, and boisterous conduct, rendered their presence an intolerable annoyance.

All the officers, whatever their rank or character, were fond of dress to an extravagant degree. They were required to possess good clothing, and were furnished with the means of procuring it: but in the expence of their garments, and the ornaments with which they were decorated, they far exceeded the desire of their sovereign, and often rendered their appearance ridiculous. Their coats were so bedecked with gold lace, that it was difficult to determine of what material they were made: their shoulders were burdened with epaulets of an enormous size: their caps were adorned, among other ornaments, with feathers nearly equalling their own height: and these articles, together with their beautiful white small-clothes

and elegant silk hose, rendered their appearance supremely fantastical; nor was it possible for an European to behold a negro thus arrayed, without feeling amused to a degree which it would have been dangerous to manifest, yet difficult to conceal.

Whatever were the merits or defects of the officers or men, they all felt animated with the warmest attachment to their country, and entertained the most enthusiastic love of freedom. They had determined never to abandon their liberty and independence, by submitting to a foreign yoke, or by allowing any other power to acquire authority in the Island; and this resolution has been so long formed, and so devoutly cherished, that death, in its most terrible forms, would have failed to subdue it. "The French," said one of them, in speaking on this subject, "still entertain the most hostile intentions towards us. England, we believe, is the principal European power truly interested in our welfare. But let the former dare step on our shores, for the purpose of attacking our rights; and, whether at Cape Tiburon or at St. Nicholas;—at Port-au-prince, or Cape Henry,[1]

[1] In these Sketches, I have invariably called this place, *Cape François*, this being the name by which it is most

—whether in the east or west, north or south, of the kingdom, they will hear but one cry, that of *Independence or Death:* they will find but one resolution animating the people of Hayti, that of maintaining their liberty, or sacrificing their lives in its defence: they will have but one alternative to act upon; either to allow us to enjoy our rights in peace, or to exterminate us."

While Christophe was endeavouring, by various regulations, to promote the discipline of his army, he was no less careful to defend his territories, by guarding the frontiers against the encroachments of his rival, and by defending the coast from invasion by the French. For this purpose, he first divided the kingdom into three provinces, each province into two divisions, each division into as many arondissements, and these again into several parishes. He then distributed his forces throughout these different parts of his territories, appointed a commandant to each division, and supplied every parish with a lieutenant, and an adjutant

generally known. Nor was it altered till Christophe became king, when he gave it the name of *Cape Henry*. Since his death, it has been again changed to that of *Cape Haytian*.

at arms. He further placed garrisons at Cape François, Sans Souci, Fort Royal, Port-de-paix, and at all the other principal towns in his dominions. That at Cape François generally occupied the commodious barracks erected during the time of the French, it being one among the few buildings which escaped destruction when that town was burnt.

At the same time he erected fortifications on the inland borders, and repaired the batteries which had been previously built on different parts of the coast; and in order that nothing might be imperfectly done, nor any necessary protection or defence be wanting, he caused these works to proceed under his immediate superintendence; and afterwards kept them in thorough repair, adding, from time to time, whatever appeared calculated to ensure the safety of the kingdom, and the tranquillity of his subjects.

The largest and most complete of his garrisons was that called *La Ferrière.* It stood on one of the highest mountains in the Island, distant about ten miles from Cape François; and commanded a view of that town, of the coast for several miles in length, and of the interior also to a very great extent. This

citadel, as it was properly called, was originally begun by the French, who, after having laid the foundation and erected part of the walls, were obliged, from want of materials, or from the opposition of the negroes, to abandon the undertaking. From the immense height of the mountain, and the extent of the country which it commanded;—from its ascent, which in many parts was over huge crags, and in others almost perpendicular;—and from the ease and security with which an enemy might be thence repelled,—it was a spot which offered the greatest advantages. This could not escape the observation of Christophe. As soon, therefore, as he found himself sufficiently at leisure to engage in an undertaking which would occupy so much of his attention and time, he caused the necessary materials for the building to be collected; set all the workmen, and the soldiers that were capable of rendering any assistance, to labour; and generally attending in person, allowed little or no intermission of the work, till it was at length completed. He then furnished it with all kinds of ammunition and provisions, occasionally removing such articles of the latter as became damaged; and considering it the safest spot in his territories, he deposited, in a secret part of it, the immense

sums of specie which had fallen into his possession.

Europeans were not permitted to ascend this mountain, nor even to approach very near it; nor could they, by making inquiries of the natives, respecting the size of the citadel, and its fortifications, procure any information at all satisfactory or credible. Its outer walls, they affirmed, were eighty feet in thickness, and of proportionable height; the provisions with which it was stored, they declared, were capable of supporting a great part of the army for seven years; the ammunition contained in its magazines, they represented as almost inexhaustible; and they further added, that from one particular part, no less than eighty pieces of cannon could be brought to bear on an enemy at once. But though this account of the place was evidently exaggerated, it was generally admitted impossible for the strongest army to reduce it by siege, or to take it by assault.

On account of its peculiar situation and immense height, this mountain is one of the most interesting in the Island. It may be seen from a considerable distance at sea, with its citadel towering high above the numerous hills by which it is surrounded, as if bidding de-

fiance to any power that could be brought against it. It looks far more interesting, and even singular, when, as is frequently the case in the early part of the morning, the beautifully white mists which arise from the nightly dews, just allowing the summits of the neighbouring hills to appear, envelope only a small part of this mountain, leaving to the rest the appearance of being supported by the clouds.

But on one of those peculiarly still, calm evenings, which occur in tropical climates, when the usual breeze which had risen, swiftly died away, the clouds suddenly gathered blackness, collecting in wild and terrible confusion, and assuming innumerable and ever-varying forms: the thunders burst forth in terrific and rapid succession: the rain poured down as though "the windows of heaven had been opened:" and the forked lightning, intermingled with horrid flashes, threw a dismal and appalling glare on every object;—in a moment, the citadel on which so much labour and ex pence had been bestowed, was one heap of ruins. The ammunition lodged in it had exploded; the stores it contained were destroyed; of the specie, some was thrown at an immense distance, and some scattered on the sides of the mountain; and out of three hundred sol-

diers, a few only escaped, who hastened in wild amazement to Cape François, to tell of the dreadful catastrophe.

The first object of Christophe, after this accident, was to gather up all the specie that could be found. He then selected from the materials of the ruined structure, such as were still fit for use, and collecting others, caused it to be rebuilt without delay. Attributing the accident chiefly to the explosion of the ammunition, he now placed but a small quantity, such as was necessary for immediate use; and strengthening and improving it from time to time, he at length rendered it a place of greater convenience and security than before.

Shortly after the peace of 1815, a party of Prussian officers proceeded to Hayti, probably with the hope of improving their circumstances; and on their arrival at Cape François, tendered Christophe an offer of their services. Being especially on his guard against the stratagems of France, at this period, he at first strongly suspected the designs of this party, and refused to listen to their proposals; nor could he, till he had obtained the most satisfactory proofs of their probity, be prevailed upon to dismiss his

suspicions. Convinced at length that they were neither employed by the French government, nor approved of the designs it had already declared respecting St. Domingo, he accepted their offer, and appointed them to different departments in the army.

For some time both parties continued on amicable terms: Christophe saw that his troops made rapid improvement under their superintendance, and often expressed his entire satisfaction with their conduct; and the officers also, though their pay was not so liberal as they had hoped, relied on the repeated promises of the king to augment it. But a misunderstanding at length took place, probably arising from the suspicions of which Christophe could not divest himself entirely, which caused trouble and vexation on both sides. At the same time, the failure of an undertaking which the Prussians had engaged to accomplish, tended to widen the breach, and eventually terminated in an open quarrel. They had, with great labour and at considerable expense, prepared the necessary works for constructing cannon; but unfortunately on the first trial, the attempt utterly failed, and the apparatus was entirely destroyed. Christophe had the folly or injustice to attribute this accident to ignorance, or

to design; and in either case, it furnished him with such a pretext for diminishing, instead of increasing their pay, as he had been long anxiously seeking. And still further to evince his displeasure, he charged the officer who had conducted the undertaking with so much of the expences attending it, as amounted to a greater sum than he had received for all his services; and this injured man was subsequently obliged to quit Christophe's territories, not to seek redress for his grievances, but to procure the means of subsistence.

Those who remained often regretted that they had quitted Europe on a speculation so fruitless and unsuccessful. They had evidently formed wrong expectations of the estimation in which their services would be held, and of the money they should in consequence acquire; and when they found their hopes disappointed, they grew discontented with their lot, and even negligent of their engagements. Their situation, in the end, became truly distressing: they felt no longer able to live in a manner suitable to their rank; they wished to return to their native country, but had not the means of defraying the expenses; and when they begged Christophe to assist them, they met with a positive refusal;—for he, though evi-

dently disliking their persons, appeared still desirous of profiting by their services. Some of them succeeded at last in reaching Port-au-prince, and having obtained assistance at that place, thence embarked for Europe.

The remaining few became in time more reconciled to their circumstances, and less anxious about quitting the Island. But one of them, having been engaged above three years in Christophe's service, renewed his request that he would assist him to return to his country; urging as a reason, that he wished to see his parents again, now far advanced in life, and earnestly desirous of beholding their only son once more. Christophe could not positively deny a request so reasonable: but he withheld his consent,—now framing one excuse, and then another;—sometimes complimenting him on his services, and at other times treating him with neglect;—till there could be no longer any doubt of his intention to detain him. This disappointment deeply affected the officer, and it so powerfully preyed on his spirits that he soon became ill of the fever, and in two days after the attack fell a victim to that destructive disease.—There appears to have been no just cause for the illiberal conduct of Christophe towards these men. His retaining them as

long as he could in his service, showed that he had no solid reason for suspecting their designs: except in one instance, they had given him no ground of dissatisfaction; and if, as is probable, they neglected at first to pay him that respect and homage which he was now accustomed to receive, (for after his elevation to the throne, he was extremely tenacious on this point;) this trifling omission does not render his conduct less dishonourable and unjust.

The improved state of Christophe's army, and the security in which that part of the Island over which he presided was placed, may be inferred from the testimony of the Haytian writer, from whose work a few extracts have been already made: It is, however, necessary to premise that the latter part of his statement is somewhat exaggerated. "The art in which we have made the greatest progress," he observes, "is unquestionably the art of war: and this is not surprizing, for since the year 1790 we have been almost constantly engaged in it.

"During our first conflicts, our ideas respecting war were extremely limited; we did not know the use of fire-arms; and we rushed to the combat, in the utmost disorder,

armed with spits, iron hoops formed into sabres, and sabres of wood, or any other instrument we could procure.—By little and little, we learnt to carry on war at our own expense, and to fight in line. Our different contests with the planters, the English, and the French, and especially our civil wars, have enabled us to make considerable progress in the military art: insomuch that all our men of a certain age are old soldiers, and few are found among them who are not covered with the most honourable wounds.

"Among the numerous evils," he continues, "which we have experienced from the French, we have had at least a few advantages. The army of Le Clerc was composed of a vast number of men possessed of great military talents; and we have profited, more or less, by their lessons, either by fighting in their ranks, or against them. At present"[1] he affirms, "our own experience, joined to what we have acquired, render us incomparably more powerful than we were formerly; the military art is become familiar to us; the sieges we have made or sustained, and the citadels and forts

[1] The work from which this extract is taken was published at Sans Souci in 1817.

we have constructed, sufficiently demonstrate the progress we have made in the attack and defence of places." And he concludes by asserting, "our artillery, our bombardiers, and our cannoniers are excellent; our grenadiers for an assault, would dispute it with the best troops in the world; for ambuscades and for harassing the enemy, it is impossible to find better soldiers than our light infantry; and our cavalry are well mounted and well disciplined, and capable, when occasion requires, of supporting a vigorous and brilliant charge."[1]

But while Christophe was diligently occupied in improving the discipline of his troops, and defending his territories, another object of paramount importance engaged a considerable share of his attention, in the accomplishment of which he displayed his accustomed ability.

[1] Reflexions politiques: pp. 93—95.

IX

ESTABLISHMENT OF SCHOOLS IN HAYTI :—EDUCATION OF THE PRINCE ROYAL AND PRINCESSES.

NOTHING was more necessary, at this period, for the improvement and welfare of the Haytians, than the establishment of a general system of education. With the exception of some mulattoes, who had been educated in their youth, and of a comparatively small number of intelligent negroes, the adult population were in a state of utter ignorance: their subjection to slavery during their early life, and their long and arduous struggle to escape from that yoke, having necessarily deprived them of all access to the sources of knowledge. Nor had any effectual steps been taken, since the establishment of their liberty, to provide for the instruction of the Haytian youth. For though the late chief acknowledged its necessity, and directed that schools should be founded throughout his dominions, his follies and cruelties, together with his incapacity and ignorance, caused this, as well as other useful measures, to be but imperfectly executed. And

the present chief, having been long occupied in defending his authority, and placing it on a solid basis, had hardly found sufficient leisure to concert plans rather for the safety of his subjects, than for their immediate improvement. But as soon as he had provided for the security of his power, and the execution of the laws, he immediately directed his attention to objects of equal importance and utility; and perceiving how effectually education, in particular, would tend to improve the character of his subjects, to qualify men for filling the various departments of the state, and to dispose all to discharge aright the duties of public and private life, he proceeded to take measures for the instruction of the young, and to establish some method adapted to their capacities, and admitting of general application.

He had already learnt, by means of his correspondence with some English gentlemen, that the Lancasterian system, being singularly adapted to the education of youth in the rudiments of knowledge, had been acted on with great success in this country;—he also knew that a society had been formed for the purpose of establishing schools on this system, and for preparing young men to superintend them:—and it was further stated, that if he was desirous

of introducing it into Hayti, that society would readily furnish him with schoolmasters duly qualified for the work. In consequence of this information, he caused an application to be made to the British and Foreign School Society for such a number of instructors as was thought necessary to commence the undertaking; and all matters relating to their salaries and other expenses being arranged, six teachers, who had been previously engaged in superintending schools in England, sailed for Hayti.[1]

On their arrival at Cape François, which was in 1816, Christophe afforded them every possible facility, and at the same time exempted them from the disagreeable regulations to which the other white residents were subject. Thus encouraged, they proceeded in the prosecution of their object with great diligence and application: buildings were prepared under their inspection; books, and every other necessary apparatus, were provided; and in a short time, schools were established at Cape François, St. Marc's, Gonaives, and other towns, containing nearly 2000 pupils. In these schools, the Haytian youth were taught reading, writing,

[1] Soon after the schools were established in Hayti, and the utility of the system began to appear, Christophe presented this society with 100 guineas.

the elements of Arithmetic, and English; and after they had made considerable progress in the latter, the business of the school was conducted in that language. The object of this regulation, it was stated, was to introduce English into general use; for so thoroughly did Christophe detest the French, that he was anxious to abolish every thing that indicated their former possession of the Island; to accomplish which, he was determined to leave no means untried.

Among the first things which I visited, after my arrival in Hayti, was the school established at Cape François. The place appropriated to this purpose was a large building, situated in a retired and elevated part of the town, and was as properly arranged, and as perfectly furnished with all the necessary apparatus, as the best schools conducted on this system are prepared in England. This school contained from one hundred and fifty to two hundred boys, from eight to sixteen years of age. When I entered the room, they were regularly divided into their classes, all busily engaged at their lessons; and their evident attention and application could not fail to strike a visitor. The sight of so many young negroes, employed in acquiring the rudiments of learning, would have been

to any one, as interesting as it was novel; to those who feel a just concern in the welfare of the African race, it was peculiarly so; nor was it possible to witness it, without recollecting how different would have been their condition had they been enslaved, and rejoicing at the change which had led to such beneficial results.

The master of this school, who was an intelligent young man, had conducted it from its commencement; and his ability and attention appeared from the perfect order which prevailed throughout. My inquiries of him respecting those placed under his instruction, related to the following particulars: whether they displayed common aptness for learning;—whether they readily remembered what they acquired;—and whether they were capable of the application expected from boys in general of their age? To these questions he replied, that among so great a number as were committed to his care, there were, of course, several whose incapacity prevented them from making any great progress; but that the majority learnt without much difficulty, and many even with considerable facility: that with regard to their memory, their gradual advancement from one branch to another, and their readiness in recollecting small pieces of poetry or prose, which they

were occasionally required to learn, were satisfactory proofs of its being sufficiently retentive: and at the same time adding, that they required no more powerful stimulus to application and diligence, than is necessary for youth in general. In answer to a question respecting the general character of his pupils, he further stated that they were far less obstinate and refractory than he had expected to find them. The facility, he said, with which they became familiarized to the mechanical part of the system, was surprizing; the necessity of inflicting severe punishment, he stated, was not frequent; if a few were disobedient and inattentive, he observed, others were no less diligent and submissive; and pointing to the state of the school at that moment, he hoped, he said, its order and regularity were indications of its flourishing condition, as well as of the docility and submission of the boys.[1] He concluded his answers by assuring me that, on the whole, he found the young negroes and mulattoes as apt

[1] Since my return to England, I have visited the Central School of the British and Foreign School Society, in the Borough-Road, London; and granting, as every one must, that it is conducted with admirable order, yet I confess I could not perceive its superiority, in point of general discipline, to that consisting of the Haytian youth at Cape François.

to learn, and as ready to remember, as he had found the youth of our own country.

At this period, all the boys of the school could read and write; many of them were acquainted with the introductory rules of arithmetic; and some spoke the English language with considerable ease and propriety. At the request of the master, I called several of his pupils indiscriminately, and proposed to them questions, according to the classes in which they stood; and the result of this examination was a conviction that, whatever may be affirmed of the stupidity of the negro, he is no further inferior in intellect to others, than the system of slavery renders him. Of this I received a further confirmation by subsequent trials. I directed a certain number of these lads, to commit to memory select pieces in English and French, some in poetry, and others in prose; and promised to encourage them, by bestowing appropriate rewards on those who should repeat these pieces most readily and correctly. At the expiration of the time appointed them for learning, they each recited their respective portions with so much ease and propriety, that it was difficult to determine to whom the prizes should be adjudged; and the only satisfactory mode of

arrangement appeared to be that of increasing the number, so as to give to each boy a trifling reward. A short time afterwards, I heard them repeat the same pieces; and they rehearsed them with nearly the same readiness and correctness as they had previously done.

One of the elder boys of this school was particularly pointed out, as distinguished from his school-fellows, by his great aptness for learning, and for the progress he had made in some branches not usually included in the Lancasterian system of education. He was an interesting looking lad, about sixteen years of age; and occasionally undertook, in the absence of the master, the superintendence of the school. Being desirous of ascertaining the extent of his acquirements, I requested him to call at my lodgings, for the purpose of examining him. On his compliance with this request, I first proposed to him a few questions in the Single Rule of Three: these he answered with perfect ease. I then proposed others in the different Cases of Practice: these also he performed with equal facility. After this I tried him in the Simple and Compound Rules of Vulgar and Decimal Fractions; and found him no less familiar with them: but the Square Root somewhat puzzled him; and in the Cube Root,

he felt totally unable to proceed.—His next trial was to translate a paragraph, from one of the pieces in Enfield's Speaker, into French; which he did without much difficulty, and, as far as I was qualified to judge, with a great degree of accuracy. He was then requested to give, in writing, a translation of a page of Bossuet's *Histoire Universelle* into English; and was furnished with a dictionary for his assistance. About this part of his examination he employed considerable time, and appeared to bestow on it special attention and care; he repeatedly corrected his translation, copied it several times before he appeared satisfied, and even then hesitated to hand it to me. But when completed, it far exceeded my expectations; for though it contained one or two Gallicisms, in point of sense and grammatical construction, it was remarkably correct. Finally, he pointed out, on a map, the boundaries of the four quarters of the globe, the situation of his own country with its latitude and longitude, the limits of the European nations with their capitals, the principal islands of both hemispheres, and the more remarkable mountains, gulphs, and lakes, with a readiness as surprizing as it was satisfactory: at the same time, answering the questions proposed to him respecting the

religions and peculiar manners and customs of different nations, with like facility and accuracy. During the whole time, his manners were perfectly unassuming; it was also evident that he had been especially assisted and encouraged, and that his progress was proportionably rapid and sure; and I confess that the result of this examination afforded me as much gratification as any circumstance I witnessed during my stay in the Island.

While the school at Cape François was in this flourishing condition, and presented such satisfactory proofs of the capacity and application of the Haytian youth; those established at Gonaives, St. Marc's, Fort Royal, and at other places, were, I understood, (for I had not an opportunity of visiting them,) in a state equally encouraging and prosperous. The young negroes admitted into them were stated to have exhibited similar proofs of their possessing a ready apprehension, and a retentive memory; and while, by their progress, they afforded the utmost satisfaction to their teachers, their facility of acquirement rendered the labour of instruction far less difficult and tedious than had been anticipated.

In the meantime, a "Royal Board of public

Instruction" had been established, for the purpose of superintending the education of youth, and of extending the present system, whenever it should become necessary. It consisted of two dukes, five counts, and four barons, some of the most intelligent and active of Christophe's adherents, and therefore the best qualified to undertake the duties which their situation involved.[1] In the first account of their proceedings, published in the Haytian Gazette, they declare it as their belief that "Instruction, when founded on the true principles of liberty, religion and morals, is one of the most fruitful sources of public prosperity, and essentially contributes to the good order of society, and obedience to the laws:" And in conformity with these views, they express their resolution "to give regular organization to this important branch of the administration, and to establish suitable regulations for its superintendence."

The more special objects of this Board were, to provide that "education be founded on good principles, viz: those of religion, respect for the laws, and love to the sovereign; to confirm

[1] De Limonade and Dupuy were of the number; respecting whom see pp. 153—157.

the regulations already ordained for this purpose, and to appoint such others as should be deemed expedient; to maintain order, discipline, and the observance of the rules, in the national establishments for public instruction already existing; and to found new schools, and colleges or academies, whenever it should appear necessary." To facilitate the accomplishment of these objects, "three inspectors were nominated for each establishment, chosen from among the respectable residents of the neighbourhood where it was situated; whose business it was to visit the places of instruction, and to correspond with the Board on all things relating to their appointment: In addition to which, one of its own members was selected to make similar visits, at stated periods, and to render an account of the state of the schools, and of the progress of education, as reported by the inspectors and masters." In pursuance of the same objects, it was further determined that the Board should, every six months, present to the king a report of the progress of public instruction, with the names of the masters most distinguished for their attention and care: and that, more especially, to encourage the students of the different establishments, annual prizes, granted by his majesty, should be

awarded to those who, by their diligent and successful application, should merit particular distinction.

Conformably with the general design of the "Royal Board," when the schools had been some time in operation, and the elder boys had acquired the rudiments of knowledge, it was resolved that another establishment should be founded for their further instruction, denominated the *Royal College*;—an appellation perhaps somewhat misapplied, the institution being similar to the grammar schools, or to the more respectable academies, in England. Cape François was fixed on for its situation; that place being the capital of the kingdom, and possessing greater advantages than any other: while a suitable building was preparing for the purpose, a proposal was made to two English gentlemen, through the same medium by which the Lancasterian school-masters had been procured, inviting them to Hayti to superintend the institution, and offering them a liberal remuneration for their services; which proposal was accepted: the students were then selected from among the more meritorious of those who had previously distinguished themselves by their conduct and acquirements; and thus the college (if such

it must be called,) was established without either difficulty or delay.

A considerable number of the Haytian youth were now instructed in Latin, English and French composition, history, geography, and mathematics; and were assisted in these pursuits by tutors whose attainments fully qualified them to direct their studies. The classical professor, on whom at first devolved the entire charge of the college, devoted himself to a task at once laborious and irksome, with the utmost zeal and diligence. He strove to simplify his instructions, so as to render them intelligible to the slowest understanding; he varied his method of teaching according to the different capacities of his pupils; he assisted them in their difficulties, and encouraged them by his mildness and persuasions; and being a clergyman of the Anglican church, he added to his usual engagements, that of occasionally instructing them in the doctrines and precepts of the Christian religion. Nor was the mathematical professor less indefatigable in his endeavours to promote the improvement of those committed to his charge. He was a gentleman of considerable scientific attainments, highly respected by Christophe and the Board of Instruction, for his superior qualifications

and esteemed for his amiable disposition and obliging deportment by all who had the happiness of his acquaintance. Though unaccustomed to the education of youth, previously to his arrival in Hayti, his intimate knowledge of mathematics, accompanied by a correct judgment, enabled him to adopt a method of instructing his pupils, perfectly adapted to their abilities and attainments; and while he endeavoured to initiate them into the elements of science, he was not forgetful to encourage them by the most powerful motives. Desirous at the same time of employing his leisure hours in the promotion of some useful object, he occasionally delivered lectures on mechanics and chemistry; and being provided with the apparatus necessary for the purpose, he illustrated their principles by suitable experiments.

Under the tuition of these instructors, the students made considerable advances in those branches of learning to which their attention was now directed. The majority were able, in a short time, to construe the more easy Latin authors without much difficulty; they wrote English and French with ease and correctness; and they especially delighted in the study of history and geography, and regarded it rather as a recreation, than as a task. The mathema-

tics alone they found so difficult as to require every possible encouragement to induce them to proceed. But if they made slower progress in this, than in other pursuits, it arose more from the peculiar application it requires, than from any defect in their mental powers. They possessed, it was evident, the ability to learn; but had not always resolution to persevere in a study so dry and abstract, and to those who have not a genius peculiarly adapted to it, so utterly uninviting. Yet a few, who were distinguished from the rest, more for their patient application, than for greater quickness of parts or strength of memory, steadily persevered; and having overcome the first difficulties, which to their fellow-students had appeared insurmountable, they afterwards advanced with considerable ease; and at length became as familiar with the elements of geometry and algebra, as they were with their previous acquirements.

Among other circumstances connected with their progress in this branch of learning, the following may not be uninteresting: During the period that the late Sir Home Popham was appointed to the Jamaica station, he paid occasional visits to Cape François, the special object of which, there will be occasion to men-

tion hereafter. On the last of these visits to that place, whilst on his return to England, he made particular enquiries respecting the college, and went in company with baron de Dupuy to see it. He was exceedingly pleased on entering, at observing the order and regularity with which it was conducted; and was still more gratified by the evident progress of the students. Being informed by Dupuy that, among other things, the mathematics also were taught, he was curious enough to try the proficiency of the class, by pointing out some geometrical propositions for them to demonstrate. They readily constructed the diagrams, and gave the demonstrations with correctness and facility; and the Admiral appeared singularly gratified with this unexpected proof of the ability and acquirements of negroes.

Such were the plans of Christophe, and of his assistants in this department, for the instruction of the Haytian youth; and such the success which attended them. A more minute account of these establishments might be easily given; but it would not, probably, be interesting, and sufficient has been said to give a tolerably accurate idea of their state, and of the capacities and progress of the youth belong-

ing to them, to render it unnecessary. Whatever further information might be given, it would, in like manner, tend to overthrow that strange and groundless prejudice which exists respecting the stupidity of the negro ;—a prejudice so evidently unfounded, as to require, it might be supposed, neither arguments nor facts to be produced in proof of its absurdity.[1]—But while measures so judicious and effectual were pursued for instructing the male part of the rising generation, it is to be lamented that no provision

[1] A respectable West Indian once said to me, "Sir, I have had every opportunity of studying the character of negroes, and of forming a correct opinion of their mental powers; and it is my firm belief that though they are human beings, they are a race essentially inferior to our own; destined by providence to live in subjection to us, and to administer to our pleasure. To grant them their liberty, would be to place them in a state for which they were never intended, and can never be qualified. They are fit only for slaves, and as such they must be held in bondage." Will it be credited that this was seriously affirmed, and as seriously believed, by a man who appeared, in all other respects, sensible and intelligent, and not deficient in humane and generous feelings? —This is not the place for discussing any topics relating to the general emancipation of the negroes, nor for examining the arguments employed by the parties who oppose or defend it. It may however be remarked, that of those who form their opinion of the negro race by personal observation, they whose minds are neither swayed by interest, nor perverted by

was made for the education of the females of Hayti. With the exception of the mulatto women, several of whom had been taught to read and write, and of a small number of mulatto and negro girls, educated at two private schools at Cape François, the female population were allowed to remain in entire ignorance. No pains were taken, no method was adopted, nor even contemplated, for instructing their minds, or correcting their manners; and though the unhappy effects of this neglect, on their character and conduct, were plainly perceived by the more intelligent Haytians, yet either from indifference, or, as is more probable, from the difficulty of procuring female teachers, no attempt was made to supply this deficiency.

It was nevertheless an inestimable advantage to the Haytians that they had, at this period, a ruler possessed of no ordinary genius, who however ambitious of power had not yet suffered his love of dominion to overcome his

prejudice, invariably attribute the apparent mental inferiority of the negro as a slave, to the system to which he is subject; and consequently the position which maintains 'that he is merely an intermediate link in the chain of being, connecting man with the brute,' they consider of a nature too grossly absurd, to merit any thing better than ridicule.

solicitude for the welfare of his subjects. It was no less a happy circumstance for Christophe, that he was not entirely destitute of men whose education, though limited, qualified them to carry the plans of their sovereign into effect. Nor is it improbable that they first suggested to him the propriety and advantages of establishing places of public instruction, and of giving them the sanction and support of the government. On the other hand, Christophe spared neither labour nor expence, in order to the accomplishment of an object so essentially necessary to the improvement of the people: and as without his co-operation, nothing could be effected on a large scale, he readily embraced every measure that appeared calculated to render these establishments more permanent and more generally useful. Under these circumstances, education was rapidly advancing in Christophe's dominions; its beneficial effects soon began to appear; and time only was required to render its influence more extensive and lasting.

While Christophe evinced this solicitude for the instruction of the younger classes of his subjects, he was especially anxious that his only surviving son should receive an education

suited to his rank and prospects. This young man, of whom a brief account may be given in this place, bore little resemblance to his father, either in his person, abilities or disposition. His countenance was perfectly of the negro cast, without the slightest expression of shrewdness or intelligence, or of any intellectual or moral quality, saving that of boyish conceit and obstinacy. His height was rather below that of negroes in general; and his extreme corpulency rendered him unequal to any great exertion. To have formed an opinion of his age, from his size and general appearance, he would have been supposed rather a man of thirty, than a youth of sixteen; and to have judged of his character from his physiognomy, he would have been thought neither amiable nor intelligent. Yet by some he was said to be good-natured, frank, and obliging; while by others he was considered trifling, capricious and overbearing. It is certain, however, that he was too tenacious of his dignity, and too impatient of contradiction, to be either agreeable to those immediately about him, or generally beloved by the people.

But a single fact may afford a more correct idea of his character, than any general description, however just, can convey. While

attending a review of a part of the army, he determined on showing his consequence, by interfering in matters of which he was necessarily ignorant; and riding up to the commanding officer, a general of ability and experience, he charged him with ignorance of his duty, and insisted that he would alter his arrangements, or resign his command. The general, surprised at the insolence of the youth, but unwilling to expose his folly, gently reproved him for his conduct, and respectfully reminded him that, in the present instance, he was under no obligation to obey his orders. This was an answer which he did not expect, and could not brook:—for should he, the prince royal of the kingdom, and the heir-apparent to the throne, submit to a reproof from one so much his inferior? He would not; but determined on revenge: nor did he cease, till by entreaties and misrepresentations, he prevailed on the king to degrade the general, and to punish him with temporary confinement. —By this, and similar instances, the prince exhibited in his conduct repeated proofs of his weakness and vanity; while, at the same time, he furnished little indication of such abilities as the important station for which he was destined so urgently required. For though his

talents might, if properly cultivated, have fitted him to fill some useful post in the state or the army, they could never have qualified him for succeeding to the honours and authority of his father.

The prince's preceptor was baron de Vastey, the mulatto to whose work repeated reference has been made in the preceding pages; who, though inferior in rank to many less distinguished for their talents, requires some distinct notice, on account of the singularity of his character. He was said to have been educated at Paris about the time of the French revolution; and his book proves that he had availed himself of the advantages which that place afforded, for improving his mind, and acquiring useful information. The objects of this work were, among other things, to defend the Haytians for having expelled the French from St. Domingo, taken possession of their property, and asserted their own independence: to maintain the legitimate right of the king of Hayti to the powers and prerogatives which he exercised over his people: to ridicule the absurd prejudices of the ex-colonists respecting the negro character, and to express the contempt of the Haytians at all their schemes for recovering their possessions, and at all their threats of vengeance;

and lastly to declare that, whatever the French or any other nation might determine respecting them, they should eternally hate their former oppressors, and defy their attempts to enslave or molest them. In the execution of this work, he displayed considerable information on all subjects connected with modern history, legislation, and political economy; and occasionally shows that he had not entirely neglected literature and science. Its reasonings, though never profound, are often just and conclusive: the opinions it professes to maintain respecting liberty, good government, the importance of public institutions for the improvement of the people, and several other subjects, are creditable to the writer's judgment: and finally its style is occasionally obscure, frequently bombastic, but in some parts perspicuous, and energetic.

Another piece had proceeded from his pen, in the form of a play; the object of which was to represent the more remarkable and meritorious parts of Christophe's life. Whatever were the abilities or acquirements of the author, this piece showed that he was totally unqualified to write dramatic poetry: for being destitute of any distinct plot, it was nothing more than an attempt to exhibit events which

had no relation to one another, and but little to its general design; and while its parts were consequently unconnected, its characters also were unnatural and feebly supported, and its language greatly inferior to the author's former production. But notwithstanding its defects, of which the Haytians were hardly sensible, it was occasionally performed in presence of its hero, by his dukes, counts, and barons; and was received with unbounded applause.

Had the character of de Vastey been as consistent, as his abilities were respectable, he would have deserved our admiration; but this unhappily was not the case. His fierceness, his duplicity, and his meanness, rendered him at once despicable and odious. He cheated whenever an opportunity offered, and afterwards boasted of his dishonesty. The hatred which he entertained towards whites of all nations rendered him sometimes an object of terror. Regarding them with utter abhorrence, he rejoiced to do them the most unprovoked injuries; and on one occasion he was heard calmly to declare that if he were allowed to follow his own wishes, he would massacre every white man in the Island. The monster who had wantonly imbrued his hands in the blood of his nurse,—for with this horrid crime was he

charged,—and who, during the struggle for liberty, had coolly assisted in the massacre of thousands, was alone capable of conceiving, and had he been permitted, of executing, so dreadful a purpose. In short, he was the very counterpart of Dessalines,—an assemblage of all that was mean, and savage, and diabolical. A gentleman who had occasion to be often in his company, and who was intimately acquainted with all his proceedings, considered him a very fiend. His countenance corresponded with his character: it was a correct index to the dark passions, and sometimes to the villainous purposes, of his soul; and often revealed their workings, when he was most desirous of concealing them.

His talents at first recommended him to Christophe, and by flattery he secured his favour. His professed attachment to the cause of the king, and the zeal he pretended for his service, were the means of raising him to the dignity of a baron, and of a knight of the order of St. Henry: and on account of his acquirements, and the solicitude he expressed for the young prince's improvement, he was chosen for his preceptor. The most abandoned of men are supposed to possess some redeeming qualities; and such was said to be the case, in one

instance, with de Vastey: for he was represented to be a kind and affectionate husband. Though it may seem impossible to reconcile this trait in his character, with others so directly opposite; yet as the savage himself is often found capable of the strongest conjugal affection, even de Vastey might have possessed it.—But in describing the preceptor, we must not forget his royal pupil. What progress the prince made while under his care, it is impossible to say. If he advanced in learning by the baron's instructions, he was not likely to derive any good from his example. His education was afterwards superintended by a gentleman from England; but he was then grown too old to submit to the directions of a tutor, and too averse to application to be capable of any further improvement.

The education of Christophe's daughters was another object of his solicitude, yet one which had been somewhat neglected; for though the princesses of the kingdom, they were rather deficient in those accomplishments which become persons of such rank as they claimed. To supply these defects, he at length procured the assistance of two ladies from America, well qualified to direct their studies; under whose

superintendance they made considerable progress, and with whose services, both the king and queen expressed their entire satisfaction. The following particulars, communicated by one of these ladies, though rather more descriptive of the circumstances of their arrival in Hayti, and of their introductory visit to Sans Souci, than of their subsequent residence, may nevertheless be satisfactory and interesting.

"We embarked," this lady observes, "at Philadelphia, and in fifteen days reached Cape François. We landed much debilitated by the illness we had suffered during the passage; and the first view of the desolate parts of the town, and of whole streets uninhabited and in ruins, made an impression on our minds which nothing we afterwards saw or heard could fully efface. The next morning baron de Vastey waited on us; and we soon discovered in his countenance and conversation, the insidious character he bore. The conversation accidentally turned on the French: 'Well, ladies,' said he, 'suppose they were to come here,—what would you do?' This was asked with a sarcastic smile which showed that he wished to remind us of the peculiarity of our situation, and to draw from us our thoughts respecting the French, and their claim to the Island. 'What

would we do?' we replied, 'place ourselves under the king's protection, as we have now done.' He said no more, but bidding us good morning, he left us. Madame Christophe sent for us a few hours after, that we might repair to Sans Souci; but not having recovered from the effects of the voyage, we begged our visit might be deferred a few days.

"At the appointed time, an elegant London-built chariot, drawn by four greys, was sent to convey us to the palace. We sat off on one of those soft and beautiful mornings which requires a poetic fancy to describe,—ere the sun of light and life had risen from the bosom of the ocean; and during the ride, we thought nothing comparable to the beauty, the freshness, and the loveliness of a morning's excursion in a tropical winter. We were accompanied by the baron de Dupuy, who amused us as much by his inquiries and remarks respecting America, where he had lived sometime, as he pleased us by his polite and gentlemanly manners. On reaching Sans Souci, we alighted at prince John's, the king's nephew. His wife, a stout, fat, well-looking mulatto, was awaiting our arrival; by whom we were ushered into a saloon, where we were immediately surrounded by a crowd of visitors. They stared at us as though

their curiosity would never be satisfied: but their's happened to be the stupid gaze of wonder and ignorance. Some of them had never seen white ladies before; and their repeated exclamation of '*Gueté femme blanche la qu'elle belle!*'[1] amused us exceedingly. After taking coffee, we retired *pour nous reposer un peu.*

"About 11 o'clock we were summoned to the palace, and conducted into the library, where the count de Limonade, the secretary for foreign affairs, was awaiting us. After handing us chairs, he remained some minutes in silence, and then made this sage remark,—that 'we must be surprised to see him with a handkerchief about his head, as if he was ill;' and when we replied that we were not, well knowing it to be the custom in tropical climates, he as sagely wondered. In about a quarter of an hour, we heard a bustle in the adjoining passage,—the door opened,— and Christophe, preceded by six young negroes, as pages, and accompanied by some of his nobles, made his appearance. We rose and made a profound *salue:* he desired us to be seated: we knew better, and stood while he remained; not in the least intimidated by the appearance or

[1] Look at that white woman; how beautiful she is!

manners of his sable majesty. He said little to us, but turning to baron de Dupuy, he enquired if our house at the Cape was in readiness ;— and finding it was not so, he said, 'Oh, these ladies can come here and instruct my daughters ;' and immediately left us to prepare them for our reception.

"We were now conducted to another part of the palace, and shown into a spacious saloon, furnished with great magnificence and taste. We were scarcely seated when the large folding doors by which we entered again opened, and Christophe, with the queen, the prince royal, and the princesses appeared, dressed most handsomely, and with a degree of elegance which we had not expected. The queen was exceedingly obliging and affable ; she made kind inquiries respecting our passage and health ; she expressed her hope that we should be perfectly happy as long as we should remain with them ; and she assured us that she would be always ready to assist us ;—and her evident sincerity convinced us that she had a kind and affectionate heart. Her daughters were equally polite ; and appeared quite pleased at the idea of our coming to reside in the palace. On the whole we were much pleased and satisfied with the interview.

"The breakfast hour approaching, we retired to another apartment, where we partook of an elegant *dejeuné,* in company with the king's niece, and the officers of the household, black and yellow barons. It was impossible not to observe how voraciously they ate, and how rapidly the dishes disappeared. But they were very attentive to us, and the conversation, though on common-place topics, we thought more interesting than could have been expected. After our repast we withdrew to prince John's, and in the evening returned to the Cape. Such was our first visit to Sans Souci.

"It was five weeks before the necessary arrangements were made for our residence at the palace; which time we spent most agreeably in the town, where every possible attention was shown us. The apartments in the palace with which we were at length furnished, were sufficiently large for our purpose; and as soon as we were comfortably settled, we commenced instructing our royal pupils. They studied English, French, composition and drawing; and the hours we were engaged with them were from between seven and eight till ten, in the morning; and from three to five in the afternoon. The princesses differed much in their abilities and dispositions. The elder

sometimes appeared to think the difficulty of acquiring knowledge greater than it was worth. She was disposed to learn, but often yielded to that listlessness so common among natives of tropical climates. The youngest was lively and amiable; she had great quickness of apprehension; but was rather averse to application, and careless of improvement. Yet the progress of both was considerable; and the queen, and we believe the king also, felt perfectly satisfied with our endeavours.

"It is unnecessary to give many particulars of our subsequent residence: they would be devoid of interest to any but ourselves. A few months only had passed away, ere we felt our situation disagreeable in the extreme. We occasionally dined with the queen; our pupils also sometimes stopped after the hours of instruction for conversation, or we accompanied them to the gardens; but we felt, in a great measure, excluded from society; for there was none with whom we could hold a free and friendly intercourse. If we used the carriage which was at our service, we could ride only to a prescribed distance; and we were perpetually annoyed by the guard, if we ventured on a ramble, inquiring who we were, and whither we were going. The etiquette of the court

was intolerably irksome; and the inquisitiveness of the officers whom we occasionally met, not to be endured. We had come from America; and the confinement, restraint, and ceremony, we had been quite unaccustomed to, and could not suffer. The queen's kindness and attentions, indeed, made up for many inconveniences; nor was there any thing in her power which she would not have gladly done, to render our situation agreeable. Circumstances, however, continually occurring to render it unpleasant, we determined at length to resign our charge, and to quit the place. But though our stay was shorter than we originally intended, we can never recollect our residence in Hayti but with feelings of deep and lasting interest."

X.

POPULATION OF HAYTI—STATE OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE.

THE measures pursued by Christophe, especially those which related to the administration of justice, and the establishment of education, were plainly calculated to produce a favourable change in the condition of his subjects. But before we proceed to give a general view of their state during his reign, by which may be ascertained what beneficial results attended these measures, it may be proper to present some particulars respecting the population of the Island, with others relating to its agriculture and commerce.

While St. Domingo was in the hands of the French, the negro population amounted, in 1789, to four hundred and eighty thousand: by a census taken during the reign of Dessalines, the whole population, black and coloured, was estimated at about three hundred and eighty thousand.[1] By comparing these accounts it

[1] History of St. Domingo, pp. 118 and 325.

appears that, from the general revolt of the negroes in 1791 to the final departure of the French in 1803, the black population alone had suffered a loss of above one hundred thousand; and as the mulattoes had taken an equal part in the contests during that period, it may be inferred that the coloured population had experienced a proportionate decrease. It is probable, indeed, that the losses of the former were even greater: for the produce of the colony, during the first year of Toussaint's administration, did not amount to half of what it had been previously to the original commotions; a deficiency which, though it arose in some measure, from the ravages of a ten year's war, must be partly ascribed to the great diminution which had, during that period, taken place among the negroes.[1] The interest also of Dessalines, sufficiently apparent to himself in this instance, would naturally induce him to publish exaggerated accounts of the number of his subjects; as by this means, he hoped that France, inferring from his statements the power of the negroes, would delay to execute her intentions of recovering the colony. At the same time, if the accounts given of the pro

[1] See History of St. Domingo, p. 203.

ccedings of the French, and of their evident intentions to enslave or exterminate them, be correct;—and that they are so is probable from the circumstance that their truth has not been denied,—the losses of the Haytians by battles, massacres, blood-hounds, drowning, and by every other method that the most relentless cruelty could devise to destroy them, were incalculable; insomuch that had they been eventually compelled to lay down their arms, and to submit again to the French government, that government would have found it necessary to convert her vessels of war into slave-ships, and to repeople the Island with negroes from Africa, before it could resume the entire cultivation of so extensive a colony. In short, by the violent measures pursued by the planters to quell the original insurrections, by the war with the English during a period of several years, and by the final struggle with the French army under the command of Le Clerc, the Island must have been drained of so great a part of its population, as to require a period of many years to enable it to recover the losses it had sustained from so many unhappy causes.

The Haytian chiefs themselves, whatever their ambition or policy, were fully sensible of the disadvantages and dangers to which they

were in consequence exposed. They clearly perceived that without a greater number of cultivators than the Island could furnish at the close of the last war, a great part of the plantations, instead of becoming fruitful sources of wealth and prosperity, would remain in the same state in which they stood at that period, exhibiting one scene of wildness and desolation. They also considered it extremely doubtful whether it would be possible, with their present diminished forces, to expel an enemy in the event of being attacked, and thus to retain their liberty and independence. For these reasons they concluded that their freedom from oppression, as well as their prosperity, principally depended on an increase of population. Under these circumstances, they adopted various methods, to accomplish an object so obviously necessary to the security of their subjects, and the stability of their government.

Dessalines, though more distinguished for his hardihood and cruelty, than for his abilities as a ruler, had penetration enough to discover that to restore the exhausted male population, was an object of paramount importance. "One of the first acts of his government, therefore, was to encourage the return of negroes and mulattoes from the United States of Amc-

rica. In the early commotions, many wealthy planters had quitted the Island and gone to the continent, taking with them a number of their slaves, whom the want of funds to support their former establishment had afterwards obliged them to abandon: others had voluntarily emigrated thither at different periods: and many of both classes were now in circumstances of distress, without the means of returning to their country. Dessalines published a proclamation, offering to captains of American vessels the sum of forty dollars for each individual native black, or man of colour, whom they should convey back to Hayti."[1]

With the same view, he adopted another measure which, however recommended by its expediency, was open to many serious objections. "In treating with a British agent from Jamaica, Dessalines, among other commercial advantages, offered to open his ports to the slave-ships, and to allow the people of Jamaica the exclusive privilege of selling negroes to Hayti. But this was to be for the importation of men only, and those not for slavery, but for military service. To an American gentleman, who had more than one conversation with him on this

[1] History of St. Domingo, pp. 296, 297.

subject, and expressed his disapprobation of the plan, as liable to be construed into an encouragement of the slave trade, Dessalines defended it by observing, that so many men would be brought from Africa, whether he adopted the measure or not, and that instead of doing any harm, his plan would secure them from a dreadful slavery in the English Islands, to make them free men and soldiers." [1]

Christophe, on his accession to the government, pursued similar plans to those adopted by his predecessor. For though he could not procure negroes from Jamaica, as Dessalines had endeavoured to do, he made purchases of those engaged in the slave-trade, whenever an opportunity for doing so occurred. As an instance of which, an English slave-dealer, (for it is a fact that Englishmen continue, to their indelible disgrace, to engage in this inhuman traffic[2])

[1] History of St. Domingo, pp. 297, 298. The author of this work justly remarks on the reply of Dessalines that "the doctrine of political expediency has seldom, perhaps, been urged with more plausibility, though it certainly fails of a satisfactory vindication of the plan."

[2] I once accidentally fell in company with an Englishman, who commanded a small brig engaged in this nefarious traffic; whose father also, I was informed, had been occupied in the same service. He was a young man, inte-

having disposed of the chief part of a cargo in the other Islands, brought a number of young negroes to Hayti, and offered them for sale to Christophe. However strongly he reprobated the traffic, he readily purchased the youths: and selecting the finest, he placed them among his pages, and carefully provided for the rest.

Christophe also continued to encourage the emigration of negroes from America; and in order to induce them to settle in his dominions, he not only assured them of liberty and protection, but offered them all the privileges of Haytian citizens. The accounts, however, which had been spread in many parts of the United States respecting his character, were of so unfavourable a nature as to discourage many who were otherwise disposed to settle in Hayti. Yet considerable numbers of American negroes, as well as of those originally belonging to the Island, listened to his proposals; and quitting

resting in his manners, and of an intelligent countenance; and appeared to dread the most distant allusion to the injustice of the slave-trade, or to the infamy of those who made a merchandize of their fellow-men. It was a lamentable sight to behold so young a man employed in a traffic, the nature of which must soon have rendered him callous to the sufferings of others, and insensible to every feeling of justice and humanity.

the continent in small parties at different periods, they sailed for Cape François, on their arrival at which place they met with the warmest reception. Of the former the majority were mechanics, a class of men who, being much wanted in the Island at this time, found ample means of improving their circumstances. Nor did they appear, in other respects, dissatisfied with their change of residence; but sent their friends in America such favourable accounts of Hayti as to induce others, who had before hesitated to quit the continent, to relinquish their engagements there and join them.

Another plan which Christophe adopted for the same purpose may be considered an unwarrantable stretch of power, approaching even to tyranny:—he caused a law to be enacted, by which all native Haytians, and all foreign blacks and coloured people who had become naturalized, were prohibited from quitting the Island, on any pretence whatever, without the express permission of the government. This interdict he deemed it necessary to pass, probably on account of the character of his subjects; who, though in general sufficiently attached to their country, might be too readily disposed, from their unsettled habits, to remove to other Islands. Its chief object, however, was evidently

to prevent new settlers from removing for any trifling cause of dissatisfaction, and thus to secure their permanent residence in their adopted country.

Besides endeavouring to prevail on negroes and mulattoes from America to enrol themselves among his subjects, Christophe encouraged foreigners of all nations to become naturalized; for which purpose he offered to them also all the privileges of Haytian citizens, and promised them every facility in their pursuits. But however powerful he thought these inducements, few whites could be persuaded to listen to his proposals; for the majority of those who had occasion to visit the Island, whatever their occupations, naturally cherished a predilection for their native country; and entertained at the same time, too low an opinion of negroes, to allow of their placing themselves under the sway of a negro-chief, or descending voluntarily to a level with his subjects. Notwithstanding these obstacles, of which Christophe appeared perfectly sensible, even this plan did not prove altogether unsuccessful. Some were found who having, through long absence from their native land, or from their versatile temper, confirmed by unsettled habits, grown indifferent to what country or

people they belonged, so they might obtain a livelihood, formally engaged to become the subjects of Christophe, and as such, to submit in all things to his government. But these men, like the natives and American emigrants, were subject to the law which prohibited any Haytian from quitting the Island; and were required to observe other regulations which, however necessary, they felt to be no less disagreeable. For this reason they generally lamented the step they had taken, and would, had they been able, have gladly made their escape.

Among others in this situation was an English sailor, who being disappointed in his hopes, and weary of the place, had long sought an opportunity of returning to Europe, or of reaching one of the British colonies. This was the more difficult to effect, because the crews and passengers of all vessels preparing to leave the Island were examined, before they were permitted to quit the harbour. He at length entered on board a ship about to sail for Antwerp; and having, with the consent of the captain, concealed himself in the hold till the examining officer had left her, he by this means effected his escape. His object, he said, had been to get money; but finding himself disappointed in his expectations, he lamented his folly, and

began to think that he had brought indelible disgrace on his character as an Englishman, by abandoning that gallant name, as he termed it, for the less distinguishing and honourable name of a Haytian.

Such were the principal means adopted by the chiefs of Hayti for promoting so important an object as that of augmenting the number of its inhabitants; and so steadily were they pursued, that they were all more or less successful. From the time of Christophe's being declared king, when the contentions between him and his rival were suspended, the population of the Island rapidly increased; and by the middle of his reign, it amounted, according to a statement published by his orders, to three hundred and ninety thousand.

The revolutions which St. Domingo had undergone, proved as ruinous to its plantations, as they had been destructive to its population. The interior of the Island presented, before the original commotions, scenes of the greatest interest and prosperity. Its natural scenery is that of surpassing beauty and grandeur: its valleys, rich and fertile, are diversified by gentle ascents and declivities, and spread over with the most luxuriant vegetation; the plains are

magnificent in their extent, and productive in their soil; and both are bounded by mountains of prodigious altitude, which have their sides covered with perpetual verdure, adorned with the fig-tree, the palm-tree, the cocoa-nut, and the anana. "In these delightful spots," says the Abbé Raynal, "all the sweets of spring are enjoyed without either winter or summer. There are but two seasons in the year, and they are equally fine; and the ground always laden with fruit and covered with flowers, realizes the delights and riches of poetical descriptions." In addition to the beauties presented by nature, the improvements of art gave to the scene an interest and a loveliness beheld only in tropical climes. The valleys, plains, and sides of mountains, were in a state of the highest cultivation; the plantations of sugar, coffee, and cotton, were as flourishing and productive, as they were numerous and extensive; and the magnificent mansions of the proprietors, contrasting with the huts of the slaves which were scattered over the estates, gave additional variety to the prospect, and rendered these spots the most enchanting that the West India Islands can exhibit.

At the close of that contest which secured to the Haytians their liberty, the scene was far

otherwise. The grounds had been long laid waste by the ravages of war: weeds and bushes rose in profusion where before grew the sugar-cane, the coffee-plant, and the cotton-tree: estates which had once been rich and flourishing, now exhibited one scene of desolation, or resembled the impenetrable jungles of the east: while at short distances from each other were seen the remains of those splendid structures which the planters had, in their prosperity, erected,—the avenues no longer accessible, and the walls only remaining to indicate their former grandeur: and these ruins,—with the fragments of negro huts, broken implements of labour, and the apparatus once used in manufacture, which lay dispersed over the plantations,—were the only marks that the interior had ever been cultivated or inhabited.

The unsettled state of affairs during several years after the Haytians obtained their freedom, the time and labour it required to place the Island in a posture of defence, together with the follies and caprices of their first chief, prevented them from devoting that attention to agriculture and commerce which the condition of the plantations, and their own prosperity, demanded. Yet, as it was necessary to provide for the support of the government, as well as to procure

for the people the means of subsistence, such plans as were practicable under these disadvantages were readily adopted by the *emperor*, and as vigorously pursued by his assistants. The plantations were distributed with as much regard to the claims of merit and of equity, as might be expected from the character of those to whom the disposal of them belonged. Some were bestowed on the officers of the state and of the army, as a reward for the services they had rendered their country; others were claimed by those mulattoes and mustees (the descendants of whites and mulattoes,) who could prove their relationship to the original proprietors; and the remainder were retained by the government, and let at an annual rent. The cultivators also were subject to regulations similar to those appointed by Toussaint: they were permitted to choose on what plantations they would labour; they were required to work about two-thirds of the time they had done during the period of their slavery; and they received for their wages one fourth of the produce of the lands which they cultivated.

But useful as were these arrangements, the productions of the Island, at this period, bore no proportion to the quantity exported, whilst the French held possession of the colony. Cotton,

indigo, molasses, and rum, appear to have been entirely neglected; the sugar plantations also were in a great measure abandoned,—the works and buildings necessary for its manufacture previous to shipping being entirely destroyed; and the annual exports of coffee, the chief article cultivated during the reign of Dessalines, seldom exceeded fifty cargoes.[1]

As on the death of that chief, nearly one half of that part of the Island which formerly belonged to France fell into the hands of Petion, the possessions of Christophe were far less extensive than those of his predecessor. But having determined that the plantations which had been hitherto neglected should be cultivated anew, the loss he sustained, by this division of the Island, was in some measure eventually repaired; and considering these, with those which Dessalines had cultivated, as the property to which he was entitled, he proceeded to dispose of them according to his pleasure. The manner in which he distributed them was a point on which it was difficult to obtain any certain information; but it was generally understood that the greater part of the estates, especially those remarkable for their fertility, he reserved

[1] See History of St. Domingo, pp. 324, 325.

to himself: that of the remainder, he allotted some to such of his supporters whose exertions in his cause had not been sufficiently rewarded; and others he let at a moderate rent, to those whose resources enabled them to enter on such a speculation. In this instance Christophe was actuated as much by policy as by avarice: he considered it unsafe not to add wealth to power; and deeming one the safeguard of the other, he aimed at rendering all his officers dependant on himself, rather than on their own riches or influence.

The greatest encouragement was, however, given to agriculture, during the whole of Christophe's reign. The more wealthy proprietors, stimulated by the desire of increasing their income, endeavoured to make their plantations as productive as a proper method of cultivation, industriously pursued, could render them. Those who hired estates, obtained them at a rent sufficiently moderate to enable them to secure a reasonable profit, and were protected, by the laws, from any unjust demands which might be made by their landlords. And the cultivators generally, receiving a proportion of the produce for their wages, as in the time of the preceding chiefs, were, by this regulation, furnished with a powerful motive to

industry, and amply rewarded for their labour. Every year they celebrated what was denominated *la fête de l'agriculture*; on which occasions, "the inhabitants of the neighbourhood of Sans Souci collected at the palace in crowds, laden with fruits and flowers, and all the riches of a luxuriant soil, to present to their majesties their congratulations, and to renew their vows of attachment and obedience."

The want of a sufficient number of cultivators had been felt during the time of Toussaint and of Dessalines; and though the population had considerably increased since the expulsion of the French, it was still unequal to the entire cultivation of the colony. To remedy this deficiency as far as it might be done, Christophe determined on introducing among his people the use of the plough. For this purpose, he made application to his friends in England, for men acquainted with agriculture in its different branches; and in compliance with this request, two persons, recommended by a gentleman well qualified to judge of their abilities,[1] were shortly after sent to the Island. On their arrival there, they were directed first to make a trial of the implement, and in

[1] The late Arthur Young, Esq.

case it should succeed, afterwards to instruct the natives in the manner of using it. But they were not in the first instance equally successful. The grounds allotted to one of them, having been prepared before his arrival, were cultivated with a great saving of manual labour, and produced a most abundant crop. The estate which the other was directed to cultivate, required the assistance of a great number of labourers, in order to clear it from weeds, bushes and cane-roots, before he could introduce his plough; and its soil proving less fertile than that of others, little appeared to be gained in point of labour, and nothing in produce.[1] Their subsequent attempts, however,

[1] Independently of his failure in this instance, and of the temporary dissatisfaction of Christophe, this man's situation was sufficiently distressing, insomuch that he often lamented ever having quitted England. He had brought with him his wife and several young children; and there not being a good house on his plantation, which was at a considerable distance from the Cape, he was obliged to live in one partly in ruins, and destitute of every convenience. Shortly after he had taken up his abode in this place, he became ill of the fever; and through want of proper medical attendance, was for some time in imminent danger. Before he was fully recovered, his wife, exhausted by fatigue and anxiety, was seized with the same disease, and in a few days fell a victim to its virulence. He was thus left in the midst of strangers, with

were attended with equal success; and Christophe, highly gratified by this circumstance, proceeded to make arrangements for introducing the plough into general use.

With regard to the articles of produce, yams, bananas, and plantains, were cultivated by the natives for their own use. The common potatoe was also planted; but either the mode of cultivating it, or the nature of the climate, proved unfavourable to its growth; for it seldom attained to maturity. Wheat, barley, and oats, were likewise sown; which, though not wholly unproductive, yet probably from the same causes, yielded but scanty crops. On the other hand, indigo, cotton, and other articles of produce, were in a great measure neglected, as in the time of Dessalines; and thus the labours of the cultivators were confined chiefly to sugar and coffee.

Respecting the actual quantity of produce prepared for exportation, a great difference of opinion prevailed; and to decide on this point is impossible, as to have made inquiries in the proper quarters, would have excited immediate suspicion. An American merchant, who had

a large family of young children to protect and support, to proceed in an undertaking which was likely to be the occasion of constant trouble and vexation.

resided several years both at Cape François and at Port-au-prince, stated that the produce, in the territories of both chiefs, seldom exceeded half the quantity exported during the time of the French. De Vastey, on the contrary, affirms that in the year 1817, more than one hundred and fifty ships were supplied with cargoes of coffee and sugar at Cape François alone;—a number equal to that which sailed from this port, during its most peaceful and prosperous periods.[1] To which of these statements most credit is to be given, cannot be easily determined; but considering the state of the Island, and the favourable opportunities of the American of forming a tolerably correct estimate, on the one hand; and the disposition of De Vastey to exaggerate, on the other, the former opinion appears the most probable.

Christophe's method of disposing of his produce corresponded with the policy or avarice which he exhibited, whenever riches were con-

[1] According to a statement drawn up by order of the Legislative Assembly in France in 1791, St. Domingo contained, at that period, seven hundred and ninety two plantations of sugar, two thousand eight hundred and ten of coffee, seven hundred and five of cotton, three thousand and ninety seven of indigo, and sixty nine of cocoa; and the value of its productions, the same year, amounted to above 238,772,540 livres of colonial currency.

cerned. He was not only the first in authority, in wealth, and, it may be added, in natural abilities, but also the chief merchant, in his kingdom. An extensive building at Cape François, expressly prepared for the purpose, was always stored with the various productions of his estates, ready to be conveyed on board the ship of a purchaser as soon as the sale should be effected. He claimed the right of disposing of his own stock, and thus fixed his own price, before other proprietors were permitted to negociate, whatever quantity they had prepared for exportation. But as the demand for articles in constant and universal request, was always equal to the produce of all the plantations which were cultivated, this practice, though calculated to create dissatisfaction, did not eventually prevent them from disposing of their produce also. Purchases were occasionally made for English houses, by commission-merchants resident in the Island. Considerable commercial intercourse was maintained with Holland also and the Netherlands. But the chief trade was with America, which, in return for its purchases of sugar and coffee, supplied both parts of the Island with great quantities of goods, which could be procured only by importation.

XI.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE CHARACTER AND CONDITION OF CHRISTOPHE'S SUBJECTS, DURING HIS REIGN.

THE inhabitants of Christophe's territories, at this period, may be divided into four classes, viz. the nobility and officers, all of whom were proprietors,—the soldiers, (of whom some account has been given,[1])—the tradespeople and mechanics,—and the cultivators. The latter, who formed the great mass of the population, resided on or near the plantations on which they were appointed to labour. They lived, some in huts constructed of bamboo and mortar, such as they had been accustomed to inhabit; and others, in the houses formerly occupied by the planters, parts of which they easily repaired and formed into comfortable dwellings. A great proportion of them were engaged in cultivating the estates of the king, which were sufficiently extensive to furnish them with constant employment. If soldiers, as was some-

[1] Chap. viii. p. 169.

times the case, they were fed and clothed at the king's expence; if regular cultivators, they received such a share of the produce as was fully adequate to yield them a competent maintenance. Others were in the employ of the nobles and officers, who, receiving either stated wages, or such a portion of the articles they cultivated as was deemed a sufficient reward for their industry, were equally supplied with whatever could contribute to their comfort and happiness. And those who, by their exertions and economy, were enabled to procure small spots of land of their own, or to hold the smaller plantations at an annual rent, were diligently engaged in cultivating coffee, sugar, and other articles, which they disposed of, at moderate prices, to the inhabitants of the adjacent towns and villages.

It was an interesting sight to behold this class of the Haytians, now in possession of their freedom, coming in groups to the market nearest which they resided, bringing the produce of their industry for sale, and afterwards returning, carrying back the necessary articles of living, which the disposal of their commodities had enabled them to purchase, all evidently cheerful and happy. Nor could it fail to occur to the mind of a spectator properly concerned in the welfare

of negroes, that their present condition furnished the most satisfactory answer to that objection to the general emancipation of slaves, founded on their alleged unfitness to value and improve the benefits of liberty.

While the interior of the Island was in this improving state, and its inhabitants were peaceful and industrious, Cape François, and the other towns in Christophe's dominions, presented scenes of the utmost order and activity. As the former place claims, because of its importance and its frequent mention in these pages, a more particular description than has been hitherto given, an account of its situation, its original extent, and its state under Christophe, may be properly introduced in this place.

During the time of the French, Cape François was the seat of the colonial government, and the principal residence of the planters and merchants. At that period "it would have ranked among cities of the second class in any part of Europe, for beauty and regularity. It consisted of between eight and nine hundred houses of stone and brick, many of them handsome and commodious, besides shops and warehouses; and it contained two magnificent squares, ornamented each with a public fountain. The chief buildings were the church,

the Jesuits' college, (converted after the revolution into a government house, and place of meeting for the colonial and provincial assemblies;) a superb barracks for troops; a royal arsenal; a play-house, and two hospitals." [1]

But Cape François had shared in the fate of its former possessors. Twice had it suffered the ravages of conflagration, and till the time of Christophe little had been done to raise it from its ruins. Many of its most handsome buildings were entirely razed to the ground, and nothing but immense heaps of rubbish were left to mark their site. Others were completely unroofed, the partitions thrown down, the doors and windows destroyed, and the walls in so tottering a condition as to render it dangerous to pass near them. The largest of the squares, formed by buildings once the most superb and magnificent, presented one scene of devastation; and the fountain which formerly adorned it, now served to add, by its ruins, to the desolation of the spot where it stood. A great part of the church had been burnt; the whole spoiled of its ornaments; and its original splendour had vanished. Of the Jesuit's col-

[1] Edwards's Survey of St. Domingo.

lege but a small part remained, and that insufficient to denote its former grandeur. To complete this desolate scene, many of the streets were filled with the rubbish of ruined houses, and of the stones with which they had been paved; and others were overrun with weeds and covered with grass, abandoned to the abode of reptiles.

The view of these ruins was calculated to excite, in the mind of a stranger unaccustomed to such scenes, the most gloomy and affecting emotions. While contemplating the desolation which surrounded him, he felt as though carried back to the period when the struggle for liberty commenced; and forgetting, amidst these scenes of havock, the success which eventually crowned it, his mind fixed itself on those deeds of destruction and blood-shed which unhappily attended its progress. The recollection of these circumstances, while it failed not to increase his detestation of the injustice by which one class of men had been instigated to enslave and torture another, inspired him with the sincerest regret that an injured race had been compelled, by the avarice and cruelty of others, to pursue measures productive of so much devastation,

before they could effect their escape from the miseries of that bondage to which their oppressors had reduced them.

But notwithstanding its ruinous condition, the situation of Cape François is alike advantageous and pleasant. It stands on the northern side of the Island. In front of the town is a large harbour, rendered secure by a defence provided by nature; and behind it are some of the highest hills on that part of the coast, which are said to have preserved it, on some occasions, from the destructive effects of hurricanes. On one side, the ground, gradually rising, leads to the extremity of the promontory which forms the Cape; and on the other is an extent of country, named the plain of the Cape, which reaches to a considerable distance, bounded by some of the loftiest mountains in the Island. On account of these advantages, Christophe had, at an early period of his reign, fixed on this place as the seat of his government; in consequence of which, a great part of the houses had been for some time repaired, and were now as well furnished as they had been during the time of their original proprietors. In pursuance of a design to put the whole town in a state of repair, such of the

unoccupied houses as were least injured were, from time to time, prepared for the accommodation of the inhabitants, whose number was rapidly increasing. Among these was a line of buildings which lies immediately in front of the harbour, extending the whole length of the town; and these having been originally the most handsomely built houses in the place, their repair added as much to its beauty as to its improvement. A building which stands in the centre of the town, was slpendidly fitted up for the residence of the king, and named the royal palace. The church also was again prepared for the celebration of religious worship; the military hospital was rebuilt for the use of the sick and infirm; a new theatre was erected, by the direction and at the expence of the government; and other important alterations and improvements were begun by Christophe, which the sudden reverse in his fortunes unhappily prevented him from completing.

The population of Cape François, which at the time these improvements were undertaken, amounted, it was said, to about four thousand, consisted of the officers of the government, with those employed in their service, and of

trades-people, mechanics and labourers. The former, of whom some account has been given,[1] were obliged, for the proper discharge of their official duties, to make this place their principal residence; and their assistants, who were chiefly mulattoes, composed no inconsiderable portion of its inhabitants. These men were in general sufficiently educated to fill the minor offices of the state, their appointment to which was regulated according to their respective qualifications. Though the majority were young men who had possessed but few advantages, they were not, I was given to understand, deficient in general information; and one of them, for whose assistance I had frequent occasion, besides being in other respects deserving the situation he filled, spoke English, German, and Spanish, with as much apparent ease as he spoke his native language. In their transactions with foreigners, which were numerous, they were alike respectful in their behaviour towards them, and desirous of affording them whatever assistance they required. The diligence and regularity with which they discharged the duties assigned them, entitled them to liberal salaries; while their

[1] See pp. 151—157.

style of living, in which they endeavoured to imitate their employers, showed that their services were amply rewarded. And though filling for the present subordinate situations, the sufficiency of their income, and the prospect of advancing, by their assiduity, to posts of greater honour and responsibility, appeared to render them perfectly satisfied.

But the great majority of the inhabitants of Cape François consisted of trades-people and mechanics; the former of whom were supplied, by the resident merchants, with various articles of merchandize, such as cloths, linens, silks, and other manufactures, which they sold to the natives in small quantities, at prices sufficiently moderate. Their business was seldom so great as to engross all their time, nor its profits such as to enable them to amass fortunes; but it afforded them ample means of support, and, what always appeared a great consideration with Haytians, it allowed them the leisure they desired for indulging in their favourite amusements. Towards strangers who entered their shops, whether for the purpose of making purchases or not, they were invariably and remarkably civil;—a trait in the character of Christophe's subjects, which I believe to have been universal. The mechanics also, of whom

there was now a considerable number, were never at a loss for employment; and though many of them were deficient in skill, from having been imperfectly instructed, they were all enabled, by their industry, to gain a competent maintenance.

On the whole, the scene which Cape François presented, at this period, was as interesting, as it was in many respects surprizing. In few places of commerce could there be seen greater regularity in the despatch of business, greater diligence displayed by those engaged in it, or more evident marks of a prosperous state of things. Every man had some calling to occupy his attention; instances of idleness or intemperance were of rare occurrence; the most perfect subordination prevailed; and all appeared contented and happy. They were satisfied with their government, because they found it adapted to their state; and though somewhat less attached to their sovereign than at the commencement of his reign, for which they thought there was just cause, they were still proud of having a monarch of their own race so ably qualified to govern. So striking, in short, was their improvement, that a foreigner would have found it difficult to persuade himself, on his first entering the place,

that the people whom he now beheld so submissive, industrious, and contented, were the same who, a few years before, had escaped from the shackles of slavery.

Respecting the industry of the Haytians, it may be proper to be somewhat more explicit; for since it is frequently affirmed that indolence forms one of the most conspicuous traits in the character of negroes while slaves,[1] it be-

[1] Those who have witnessed the manner in which slaves engage in their avocations, will admit the general correctness of this statement. The severest treatment is found, in many instances, incapable of rendering them diligent in their employment;—a circumstance which might have taught those who superintend their labour, that severity is not the method to conquer their indolence, or to render them industrious in their habits. That it should do so is the more unlikely, as the cruelty exercised towards them when first dragged from their native country, and which has been more or less continued throughout the history of slavery, has produced stubbornness of spirit which nothing can effectually subdue, while they are held in chains; and over which, it is thought, nothing but repeated punishment can obtain a momentary conquest.—The question, whether, if slaves in general were emancipated, they would retain or shake off their indolence of character, may be considered as of too problematical a nature to admit of any other solution than that which time and experience can furnish. On the other hand, whether they are by nature more indolent and slothful than other inhabitants of tropical climates, may be fairly questioned; and

comes a question of some interest, whether the same disposition be equally prevalent among them when in possession of their liberty. As it regards the subjects of Christophe, their emancipation, though effected under many unfavourable circumstances, had subsequently wrought a change in their general habits, no less beneficial to themselves as individuals, than important to their security and prosperity as a people. At the era of their liberty and independence, they perceived that their support,—and if they possessed any sparks of ambition, their advancement, whether as soldiers or cultivators,—depended wholly on their own exertions. Objects were placed before them calculated to awaken their ambition, and excite them to diligence,—not merely the establishment of their freedom and independence, but wealth, influence, and distinction. They felt the force of motives unknown to them during their slavery; which, together with the regulations to which they have been subject, have affected a degree of improvement in their character, beyond what their original condition

if they are found to be so as slaves, and to require an unnatural stimulus to induce them to labour, this propensity to idleness may be justly attributed to the system under which they groan.

afforded the least ground to expect. Though of the same race, and possessing the same general traits of character, as the negroes of the other West India Islands, they are already distinguished from them by habits of industry and activity, such as slaves are seldom known to exhibit. As they would not suffer, so they do not require, the attendance of one acting in the capacity of a *driver*, furnished with the instrument of punishment in his hand, ready to apply it, as his caprice or cruelty may dictate.

As far as I had an opportunity of ascertaining, from what fell under my own observation, and from what I gathered from other European residents, I am persuaded of one general fact, which, on account of its importance, I shall state in the most explicit terms, viz: That the Haytians employed in cultivating the plantations, as well as the rest of the population, perform as much work in a given time, as they were accustomed to do during their subjection to the French. When it is considered that, in the time of their slavery, the fear of punishment was their chief incentive to labour,—that their proceedings during the struggle for liberty, so far from being calculated to subdue any previous disposition to idleness, were adverse to the

cultivation of orderly and industrious habits,—that at the era of their emancipation they were far from a state of civilization,—and that the period which has since elapsed is comparatively short, this fact, trifling as it may at first appear, becomes in no small degree surprizing. And if we may judge of their future improvement, by the change which has been already effected, it may be reasonably anticipated that Hayti will ere long contain a population not inferior, in their industry, to that of any civilized nation in the world.

Besides the inhabitants of the towns, and of the villages adjacent to the plantations, there were others whose character and habits differed essentially from the rest of the Haytians; who, though forming but a small part of the population, must not be passed over in silence. These were negroes who, being as averse to the control of the Haytian chiefs, as they had been to the tyranny of the planters, had withdrawn to the more inaccessible parts of the interior; where they remained concealed in the woods, and subsisted, for the most part, on the natural productions of the Island. Their number, which at first was inconsiderable, had gradually augmented during the various com-

motions, till it amounted, it was said, to several thousands; for which reason, had they been disposed to molest the other inhabitants, it would have been difficult to subdue or repel them. But as their object, in refusing to submit to the government of the chiefs, was rather to indulge their own roving disposition, than to disturb the tranquillity of others, they made no attempt to annoy them or their subjects; and being scattered over different districts, and withheld, by the fear of discovery, from approaching the towns, they gave them no cause of suspicion or dread.

The motives which led these chiefs to pursue measures for augmenting the population would, it might be supposed, have induced them to select some plan by which to prevail on these wandering hordes to settle among the rest of the people. But if such plan were adopted, (for I heard of none,) it must have been injudiciously conducted or hastily abandoned, as in the latter part of Christophe's reign, their number was said rather to have increased, than have diminished. According to current report, some led an adventurous mode of life, spending their time in wandering from one part of the interior to another, without any direct object to engage their attention, and satisfied with a precarious

subsistence: others, resembling in some respects the *Maroons* of the neighbouring Islands, selected the most retired spots they could find in the mountains, where they fixed their residence, erecting temporary huts and cultivating the adjacent ground, till the fear of discovery, or the desire of change, induced them to remove to other spots equally remote and secluded. Thus free from all restraints, and following the dictates of a roving disposition, they had grown more uncivilized in their habits and manners, than they were at the period of their emancipation.

An Englishman once traversing a part of the Island where these negroes sometimes collected, unfortunately missed his way; and the fatigue which he experienced, from the excessive heat he had endured and the distance he had travelled, together with the ruggedness of the path over which he was riding when night approached, rendered it imprudent for him to proceed any further on his journey. He was thus under the disagreeable necessity of passing a night on the road, where he was in danger of being assaulted by men, from whom, he thought, robbery and outrage might be justly dreaded by one in his defenceless condition. On reaching the summit of the hill over which

the broken path he was pursuing led, he dismounted from his horse, which he fastened to a tree; and having examined his pistols, his only instruments of defence, he went in quest of a place where he might conveniently rest till morning. He had gone but a few steps, when he perceived at a short distance a solitary hut, almost hid among the trees and bushes, which, though he thought probably occupied, he resolved nevertheless on entering.

On his approaching the spot, a tall fierce-looking negro, having no other clothes than an old soldier's jacket, ragged and dirty, with trowsers in a similar state, suddenly presented himself before him, and demanded in *Patois* hardly intelligible, with a menacing tone and attitude, what the stranger wanted in that place? "I am," replied the traveller, "an Englishman on my way to a town at some distance; but having lost my road, and being too much fatigued to proceed on my journey, I beg the favour of a night's lodging in your house." "An Englishman!" answered the negro, instantly changing his tone and address,—"then you shall be heartily welcome to my *cabin*; but I never expected to meet with one here." And he forthwith conducted him into the hut. It was a small wretched-looking hovel, formed by poles

fixed in the ground, with branches of trees interwoven, having for its roof also branches laid across each other, with a thin turf placed on them. The exterior was daubed with mud, for the purpose of filling up the crevices; and the interior, into which no light was admitted but by the narrow door, was divided into two parts by a wicker work about four feet in height. The smaller apartment was the negro's sleeping place, the floor of which was covered with dried leaves and grass, which served for his bed; the larger one was appropriated to general purposes, in which the traveller could discover nothing but a few utensils nearly worn out, besides a seat attached to the partition supported by a log of wood, and an old rusty sword hanging in a corner.

To what cause to attribute the sudden change in the negro's conduct, the traveller was altogether uncertain; and his first enquiry on entering the hut was, whether he had ever seen an Englishman before? The negro, in answer, related a story of considerable length, connected with the war with the English, many parts of which were unintelligible from the corrupt dialect in which it was delivered, but from which it appeared that a British soldier had once shown him great kindness when a prisoner,—"a circumstance,"

said he, "which I am sure I shall never forget." Without waiting to hear the remarks of his guest, he proceeded forthwith to provide him a supper. This repast consisted chiefly of plantains, great quantities of which grew near the hut; and as he placed them before him, he lamented, he said, he had nothing better to offer. He then fetched the horse, which he placed under a shed formed by the branches of trees, and brought it a bundle of grass to eat. Having next arranged his bed-place, furnishing it with newly-dried cane leaves,—for he had resolved to give his unexpected guest the best welcome in his power,—he seated himself by his side, and resumed the conversation. He now related the many adventures through which he had passed, both before and since his present mode of life; he told of the massacres of the planters and French residents, in which he had personally assisted; and described other measures of violence and blood-shed, in which he had often engaged, sufficiently terrific in the recital. But though communicative on other points, he refused to answer any inquiries respecting the number, habitations, and engagements of those who lived in a similar manner to himself; and notwithstanding his hospitality, the frequent wildness of his looks,

the violence of his manner, and his rage when speaking of the French, were so far calculated to excite suspicion, that his guest felt unable to divest his mind of all fear respecting his safety.

But it was now growing late, and he was desirous of rest; and throwing himself on his bed of leaves, from the fatigue of his journey, he soon fell into a profound sleep. When he arose in the morning, he found a breakfast consisting of plantains and cassava, already prepared for him, and his horse feeding on a large bundle of grass; and having taken some fruit, and a little wine which he happened to carry with him, he rose to resume his journey. His host, still solicitous for his safety, and fearing he might again miss his way, insisted on accompanying him till he should reach the main road, from which he had wandered the preceding evening; and they therefore proceeded together, the negro walking by the side of the traveller's horse, till they reached a spot from which the route was visible. The negro then intimated that he was under the necessity of returning; and having received the thanks due to his attention and kindness, and expressed his hopes that his guest would in a few hours reach the place of his destination in safety, he bade him a hearty

farewell, and hastened back to his retreat in the mountains. The Englishman then proceeded on his journey, congratulating himself on his having met with so much hospitality, where he had thought nothing but outrage and violence was to be expected.

Whatever the employments or condition of the Haytians, especially of those under Christophe, the opinions which they entertained respecting *liberty*, had great influence on their character and conduct. That ardent attachment to freedom and independence which, it has been stated, was one of the most conspicuous traits in the soldiers, was cherished by all ranks and classes with an equal degree of enthusiasm. Hence the motto selected by the chief, and so warmly adopted by the people: and the phrases,—"*Dieu, ma cause, et mon epée*,"—"*La liberté et l'indépendence*,"—were those they most delighted to repeat. Any allusion to their former slavery, or to the circumstances connected with their emancipation, invariably called forth the bitterest reproaches against the authors of their sufferings, and the strongest asseverations that death should be the fate of those who should ever attempt to enthral them. These feelings, it may be re-

marked, were perfectly natural. Liberty was a name they had been taught to venerate, to which they attached every thing that was dear, and honourable, and glorious. In the cause of liberty, thousands of their fellow-men had sacrificed their lives: freedom was a treasure they had purchased with their blood: what greater price could they give? And what they had secured at a rate so costly, it was natural they should cherish with enthusiasm, and stand prepared to defend at the risk of every thing they held dear.

But what was liberty in Hayti? A French writer affirms, "Le droit de se livrer à une profonde paresse, à une licence affrenée: soldats, paysans, journaliers, domestiques, sont plongés tous dans une corruption epouvantable."[1] This statement, it cannot be denied, is but too justly descriptive of their morals, and conveys an idea not wholly incorrect of their disposition to idleness and insubordination, when they first asserted their independence. At that period they considered themselves, not only delivered from a cruel and infamous servitude, but free to indulge in all the vices to which they had been addicted,

[1] Révue Encyclopedique, Sept. 1825.

without fear or restraint. Freedom and subordination were, in their view, incompatible with each other; and they were little prepared, in their political opinions, either to respect the authority of their chiefs, or to submit to their control. Had opinions so erroneous and absurd remained uncorrected, it is possible that the predictions of those who foretold their return to a state of barbarism, would have been unhappily realized. They would probably have abandoned themselves to all the vices peculiar to the negro character, till unlimited freedom had reduced them to a state still more degraded, than that in which slavery had left them; and Hayti, thus containing a population lawless in their conduct, and confirmed in their habits of indolence and vice, would have presented one scene of desolation, licentiousness and anarchy.

Happily, however, there were causes in operation which tended to prevent, in some degree, these dreadful consequences. For though, when they first declared themselves a free and independent people, they entertained notions so directly opposed to all order and subordination; yet the effects of their previous servitude, which they continued to feel, the want of firmness natural to their character, and their

pre-disposition to submit to a superior, though of their own race, powerfully tended to counteract the baneful influence of their rude politics. They were enamoured with liberty; but they had been so long subject to slavery, that it was no difficult matter for a sagacious and ambitious chief to bring them under his sway. Servitude was, if the expression may be allowed, their birthright—their inheritance:—so whites, in the plenitude of their power and their pride, and for the gratification of their avarice and cruelty, had ordained. The first thing they learnt was their subjection to another race of men, on whose favour they depended, whom it was dangerous to offend, and death to injure. Submission to others thus became associated with all their views and feelings, with all their hopes and fears. Hence, however fiercely enraged against those by whom they had been enslaved, or however firmly resolved to resist their usurpation, they were thus far prepared to submit to those of their own race who, by their talents and exertions, had acquired authority among them.

Whatever, therefore, were the opinions of the Haytians respecting liberty, they were not, at the period the French quitted the Island, wholly abandoned to their political caprices.

They had learnt, under the judicious government of Toussaint, to value, and in some degree to improve, the advantages of freedom. Subject afterwards to a chief who, whatever his own vices, knew how to check the lawlessness of others, they were effectually held back from that state of anarchy into which, it is possible, they might otherwise have fallen; and thus the tyranny, which they endured for a short time, indirectly tended to promote their good. The successors of that relentless despot, as they were distinguished from him, by being somewhat tolerant in their conduct and superior in the art of governing others, proceeded to establish subordination on more popular principles, and by means more effectual in themselves, and more agreeable to their subjects.

The subjects of Christophe, indeed, entertained, throughout his reign, the same ardent attachment to liberty which marked their early career; but they had also ceased to desire a greater degree of freedom than would consist with the order and peace of the state. As long as that chief set bounds to his authority, all classes acknowledged and submitted to his sway. His regulations were regarded as the laws of the kingdom, and as such were strictly enforced.

The nobility found little difficulty in obtaining the respect of their inferiors; the soldiers had been long accustomed to military discipline, and were in complete subjection to their officers; and the labouring classes were not wanting in that degree of subordination which characterizes a well-governed people.

Such, in consequence, was the order and tranquillity which prevailed, at Cape François especially, at this period, that an European, who had become sufficiently familiarized with the colour of the natives as to cease to notice it, would feel little to remind him that he was living among negroes. He would find it difficult to realize the idea that he was dwelling among a nation of blacks who a few years before were slaves; and who, because of their sufferings, might be disposed to be cruel and insolent towards whites of all nations. He would rise in the morning in safety; he would proceed in the occupation of the day without molestation; and he might retire at night with nearly the same sense of security as he would have felt in any civilized country. Those only who took up their residence in the Island at an early period of its independence, when caution might have been necessary, provided themselves at that time with arms, and continued from habit to

do, so. But the majority of Europeans and Americans, from a well-grounded confidence of safety, deemed these cautions unnecessary, and therefore seldom adopted them.

The opinions of the Haytians on the subject of *equality* were similar, in their nature, to those which they entertained respecting liberty. Their favourite maxim was, that "all are free and equal;" the natural consequence of which was a degree of familiarity in their intercourse with one another which appeared, at first sight, to level all distinctions. It might be difficult to reconcile the prevalence of these opinions with that state of subordination established among the subjects of Christophe, were it not a fact, that general familiarity of manners is often found compatible with the most perfect order and submission. In the case of the Haytians, especially, it will be recollected, that the majority of those distinguished by their rank were originally the companions of others in slavery; and though now elevated above them, by merit or fortune, their origin could never be forgotten, nor would their claims to an undue degree of respect, had they been disposed to urge them, have been regarded.

Many of the nobility themselves were not prepared to understand fully the distinctions

of rank; insomuch that if they were reminded that, to support their character and enforce their commands, it was necessary to behave towards their inferiors in a manner more consistent with their dignity, they replied, that they had never seen any ill effects arising from such familiarity as they allowed, nor perceived why their filling any office in the government, however important, should unfit them to associate with the people. Hence, the labourer addressed his employer, the soldier his officer, and an attendant a man of authority, with that freedom which a mutual opinion of equality could alone dictate or suffer. On the other hand, the officers of the army, when not on duty, frequently associated with the common soldiers; the nobles sometimes selected their companions from among the people; and the secretary of state was occasionally seen in a tailor's shop, sitting on the board with the workmen, engaged in close and familiar conversation.

Whatever disagreeable consequences followed these opinions, they were chiefly confined to domestics, and most sensibly felt by strangers. Servants considered themselves on an equal footing with him whom they served; and if asked why they did not call

him *master*, a title they never used, their usual reply was, "If he is my master, I am his slave; but there are no slaves in this country; we are all free and equal." To render their conduct in this instance still more absurd, they often deemed themselves insulted by those who should omit to address them as *monsieur* or *mademoiselle*. At the same time, they gave their opinions on subjects on which their employers were conversing with their friends, and offered their advice in matters in which they were in no wise concerned, with a degree of officiousness and self-importance, as intolerable sometimes as it was amusing at others. While waiting at table, they often obtruded their remarks, utterly unconscious of their absurdity, or of the impropriety of their forwardness; and made their observations on the persons and dress of those on whom they waited, with a freedom at times quite provoking.

Connected with these opinions respecting liberty and equality; was a strong attachment to their country. Of the majority it was the place of their birth; and having seen no other, they naturally thought it the best and happiest in the world, and were surprised that any one who had once entered it should think of quitting

it again. Thus one of them once addressed a gentleman who, having been some time in the Island, was about to return to Europe:—"How can you think of leaving us? Here we have large towns and a beautiful country; we have a good king to rule, and good soldiers to defend us; plenty of provisions and plenty of money; why then would you leave us?" To try his sincerity, a liberal offer was made to take him to Europe, where, he was told, he would see places and things very superior to any he had ever beheld. "Monsieur," replied he, "Je ne quitterai jamais mon pays: parceque je ne crois pas qu'il y a un autre dans le monde si beau, si libre, et si heureux." Though some would have gladly accepted such an offer, provided they had obtained leave to do so; they in general possessed the warmest attachment to the land which, if it were once the scene of their degradation, they had acquired by their exertions, and now regarded as their home.

The ignorance of the great body of the Haytians,—to proceed to another particular respecting them,—was such as might be anticipated from the disadvantages under which they had laboured. These disadvantages were not, indeed, alike felt by all. As we have al-

ready had occasion to state, the greater part of the mulattoes connected with Christophe had received an education which, though limited, enabled them to afford him considerable assistance in the various departments of the government. Many negroes also of good natural abilities had, by their great application, acquired a degree of knowledge on general subjects which qualified them, in the absence of persons better instructed, to fill the less important offices of the state.[1] But the great bulk of the people were still sunk in the deepest ignorance. The cultivators knew the use of their imple-

[1] The testimony of De Vastey on this particular may be properly introduced in this place. But being written in his usual style of exaggeration, it must be received with some limitation:

"At this day," he says, "all the civil and military departments of the kingdom are occupied by Haytians. Absolute necessity has done every thing for us." I am intimately acquainted with many who have learnt to read and write, without the assistance of masters. They have walked with their books in their hands, requesting those they met to inform them of the meaning of such a word, and in this manner several have learnt to read and write, though advanced in life. They have become notaries, procurators, advocates, and judges; and by their sagacity and judgment, have astonished every one. Others have become painters and sculptors of themselves; others, architects and mechanics, having nothing but a few books to guide them."—*Reflexions politiques*, p. 92.

ments of labour; the soldiers understood that of their arms; and both had adopted vague and incorrect notions of liberty; but on all subjects connected with their improvement, they were as ignorant as the slaves of the neighbouring Islands. Even in matters with which the most uninstructed are supposed to be familiar, there was as obvious a difference between them and the lower orders of civilized countries, as exists between the latter and the educated classes of society.

It is unnecessary, as it would be tedious, to enumerate instances of their ignorance: it is more to the purpose to observe that their want of instruction was their misfortune, not their fault. Their original condition had excluded them from all access to knowledge; for those who claimed them as their property, neglected every means of improving their character. They contended, absurdly enough, that knowledge of any kind beyond that which would enable them to discharge their duties as slaves, would unfit them for their employments, and render them discontented with their condition. Hence it was never a matter of inquiry with them whether the negro mind were capable of cultivation; or whether it was their duty, or their interest, to impart to it some degree of instruc-

tion. The circumstances in which the adult population of Hayti had been placed subsequently to their emancipation, were equally unfavourable to their improvement in useful knowledge. For their engagements as soldiers and as cultivators had fully occupied their time; and the measures pursued for the furtherance of education, though unquestionably judicious, were necessarily confined to the younger classes of the community.

Such was the state of the people in general. But the majority of those also appointed to places of trust and importance, often exhibited proofs of their great incompetency; and notwithstanding the statement of De Vastey, the civil officers especially were, as we have seen, rather notorious for their ignorance and partialities, than distinguished for their ability or sense of justice. But whatever the disadvantages of the Haytians at this period, one of the most useful branches of science was unnecessarily neglected, —I mean that of medicine. In a country where disease prevails so frequently, and sometimes to so alarming an extent, the knowledge of this science is of the utmost importance; and no exertion should have been wanting in order to qualify men for its practice. If it was impossible to establish a medical school, which an unsuc-

cessful attempt proved to be the case, there would have been little difficulty or expence in sending young men of promising talents to the United States, where they might qualify themselves for this useful profession. Instead of which, an inconsiderable number only of the elder lads belonging to the college at Cape François were placed under the instruction of the king's physician; a very inadequate method of supplying the deficiency. For though that gentleman was distinguished for his professional skill; yet his connexion with the royal family, and his other engagements, allowed him little leisure for directing their studies; while their duties at the college, which required the principal part of their time, rendered it impossible for them to derive much profit from his lectures. Under these circumstances, the native practitioners, who were sufficiently numerous, were in general as ignorant of the theory of medicine, as they were often unsuccessful in their practice.[1]

[1] I believe I shall remember as long as I live, the sufferings I once endured from the ignorance and awkwardness of a negro surgeon. I know not what are the pains attending the amputation of a limb; but the reducing of a dislocated joint, or the torments of festering wounds bordering on mortification, I know, would give an imperfect idea of the agonies

The effects of the ignorance of the Haytians generally, on their character and conduct, there will be occasion to speak of hereafter. But in no instance were they more strikingly exhibited, than in the superstitious fears entertained by them respecting ghosts. There was scarcely a house in Cape François in which, according to current report, supernatural visitants had not been seen; and such were the stories connected with some parts of them, that few would dare enter there, even in open day. The attics of that in which I lodged for a short time were somewhat famous for apparitions; for it was seriously affirmed that the spirits of those who had been massacred in the house were repeatedly seen there; and some red spots on the walls of one of the apartments were declared to be the blood of one of the murdered inhabitants, which, it was added, could not be made to disappear. The houses which were in so dilapidated a state as to be uninhabited were viewed with peculiar horror; and so strongly were the people impressed with the belief that the ghosts of their unfortunate inhabitants wandered among the

I then suffered. The only alleviation was delirium, which happily came to my relief, and continued till they were somewhat abated.

ruins, that few would venture near them after sun-set.

These superstitious fears, however, did not arise wholly from their ignorance. The tragical scenes which many of them had witnessed, and all had repeatedly heard related with the utmost particularity, were sufficient to inspire them with terror, and to cause even ordinary occurrences to impose on their credulity. But to attempt to shake their belief in such supernatural appearances, or to convince them of the folly of entertaining such groundless fears, was utterly vain. Every argument that could be proposed for this purpose, would be answered by a long history of extraordinary noises and fearful appearances, sufficiently appalling in the recital; and so generally did the belief in them prevail, that there were few sufficiently resolute to question their possibility, or to doubt their truth.

To these particulars respecting the general condition of the Haytians, and their opinions on subjects in which they were necessarily interested, may be added others relating to their manners, language, dress, customs and amusements.—Of the manners of the Haytians it is almost needless to state, that they resembled,

in many respects, those of the French. Having been so long under their government, during which they were in habits of constant, if not of familiar, intercourse with them, it was natural that they should lose much of the barbarity of their African manners, and gradually acquire somewhat of the *politesse* for which that people are celebrated. The more respectable classes of Christophe's subjects therefore, especially the mulattoes, possessed much of that ease of address and elegance of demeanour, which distinguish persons of good breeding. The lower orders, on the contrary, affecting the manners of their superiors, in doing which they commonly mistook assurance and gesticulation for politeness, exhibited proofs of their vanity and ignorance, in a manner as amusing as it was harmless.

The language generally spoken was a dialect (if it may indeed be termed such) of the French; so corrupt that foreigners, however conversant in that tongue, found at first the greatest difficulty in understanding the *Patois* of the Haytians. Independently of the difference in pronunciation, which was often so great as to alter the sounds of words entirely,—the construction was in numerous instances thoroughly changed; besides which, a consi-

derable number of words were in common use, which could not be traced to any French origin. The frequent employment of the same word in different acceptations, which sometimes occurred in the same sentence, greatly increased the difficulty; insomuch that, till the ear became accustomed to this singular jargon, the knowledge of French was of little service. It was unnecessary, however, to speak it; as the Haytians understood correct French when spoken by others, though unable themselves, with the exception of those who had been educated, to converse in it.[1]

[1] To illustrate these general remarks on the Haytian *Patois*, the following examples, which just occur to my recollection, may not be unacceptable to those who know French.

The article *un, une*, is invariably pronounced *nion;* as *nion lanterne*, for *une lanterne.*—*N* or *Z* is frequently prefixed to nouns beginning with a vowel; as *z'abbaye*, for *abbaye.*—Pronouns are changed, in the following manner: *Personal* pronouns are, for *je, tu, il*, &c. *mo, to, ly—nous, vous, yo. Possessive*, for *mon, ton, son*, &c. *à moue, à toue, à ly*, &c. And instead of being placed before nouns, they follow them; as *mouchoir à moue* for *mon mouchoir, z'amis à yo* for *leurs amis.—Conjunctive* pronouns, which are changed in a similar manner, instead of being placed between the personal and the verb, as in French, in Patois follow the verb; as *ly baie ly la chasse* for *il lui a donné la chasse: yo prénd ly* for *on l'a pris: nous tendé ly* for *nous l'attendons.—Possessive* pronouns, I should have added, are often preceded by a sin-

In their dress, the subjects of Christophe differed according to their rank. It has been already stated that the army officers, and it may be added, the civil officers also, were so

gular and unmeaning word, viz. *quien*; as *nous gagné quien à nous* for *nous avons les nôtres*. The following sentences will serve to show in what manner *demonstrative* pronouns are changed and used, viz:

gueté choual là,	for	voyez ce cheval;
allez voir femme là,	—	allez voir cette femme;
mo voir z'animaux là yo,	—	j'ai vu ces animaux;
ci la yo qui té vivre,	—	ceux qui ont vecu.

With regard to *verbs*, the present infinitive or participle passive is used for the *present* indicative, as *mo aller*, &c.—The *imperfect* indicative is formed by placing *té* before the participle passive, as *ly té cherché*.—The *preterite*, by adding *après* to *té*, as *mo té après l'ouvri* for *j'ouvris*.—In *reflective* verbs, the pronouns are placed thus, *nous cheminé nous*, instead of *nous nous cheminons*.—For the verb *être* are used, *été, ye, lété*, &c.—*Pouvoir* is rendered by *capable*, as *mo pas capable faire ça*, for *je ne puis pas le faire*. The *present* indicative of *vouloir*, the only tense of this verb used in Créole (or Patois) is exchanged for *vlé*. *Avoir* is exchanged for *gagner*, when denoting possession. *Only, but*, is formed by placing *necque* before the verb, instead of *ne* before, and *que* after it; as *ly necque gagné ça*, for *il n'a que cela*: and the negative *pas* also is placed before the verb, as *mo pas connais*, for *je ne sais pas*. *Donner* is exchanged for *baie*, as *baie moe ça*:* *apporter*, for *bay veni*; and *oter*, for *bay allé*, or *porter allé*.

* I was informed, when in France, that *baie* is also used by the lower orders for *donner*, in several of the remote provinces of that country.

fond of finery as to render their appearance sometimes ridiculous. This extravagance was not confined to their own persons;—it was also exhibited in the dress of their children; and boys of ten and twelve years of age were sometimes seen habited in a handsome military straight coat, with loose pantaloons, over which were drawn an enormous pair of boots; their heads being mounted with a splendid military cap, and adorned with a long *cue*, curiously plaited, attached to their cropped hair with Haytian colour ribbon. The clothing of the soldiers, the principal articles of which consisted of coarse, thick broadcloth, was little

The following words, which are in common use, differ considerably from the French:

hindé	for	*aider*	*quichou*	for	*quelquechose*
helé	—	*appeller*	*joue*	—	*jusqu'au*
sitta	—	*asseoir*	*gournée*	—	*combattre*
quioulé	—	*reculer*	*drêt*	—	*droit*
quior	—	*cœur*	*gueté*	—	*voir*
bougé	—	*demeurer*	*zombi*	—	*revenant*
poue	—	*epais*	*caze, caye*	—	*maison.* &c.

This note, already too long, I shall finish by giving an instance of the frequent use of the verb *gagner*. An Englishman, having requested a negro to lend him his horse, received the following reply: *Mouchée, mo pas gagné choual; mais mo connais qui gagné ly; si ly pas gagné ly, ly faut mo gagné ly, pour vous gagné.* The meaning of this answer will be easily comprehended by those who know French, and will afford them a specimen of the *Patois* of Hayti.

adapted to the nature of the climate. That of the cultivators, especially of the females, was in general very indifferent, and appeared to denote a degree of poverty to which they were strangers; but the nature of their occupations sufficiently accounts for its meanness. The dress of the mulatto women, on the contrary, was exceedingly neat, and sometimes elegant. It consisted of a long flowing robe, generally white, and made with considerable taste; with a kerchief thrown over the shoulders, and a Madras handkerchief for a head dress, placed somewhat in the form of a turban.

If the Haytians differed, in their general traits of character, from the black and coloured population of other West India islands, it was in their being more loquacious, vain and pretending. When conversing with foreigners, they generally saved them the trouble of much speech; among themselves, their clatter, accompanied by grimace, at once surprised and amused a beholder; and if animated, especially by any violent passion, it might be supposed that their tongues had been constructed on the long-sought principle of perpetual motion. I witnessed a singular instance of their uncommon loquacity, the day after my arrival at Cape François, in the harangue,—for I cannot call it

the conversation,—of a conceited mulatto. I had just finished my breakfast, when he entered the room, introducing himself *sans ceremonie*, by announcing, "Monsieur, je viens vous rendre visite;"—and before I could ask his name, or the object of his visit, he had seized a chair, seated himself by my side, and begun his discourse. It would afford a very imperfect idea of his speech, to describe it in general terms: it should have been heard, delivered, as it was, with an unceasing rapidity, accompanied by the most violent gestures, and a continual change of position. As, however, some of its remarks may furnish an idea of Haytian conversation, I cannot forbear presenting the following specimen:—

Drawing near me, and looking full in my face, he commenced,—"Sir, I am exceedingly happy to see you at Cape Henry; for I like all Englishmen. I hope you purpose making a considerable stay in the Island: you will, I assure you, find it extremely pleasant." Then, endeavouring to look very shrewd, though unfortunately his countenance hardly admitted of that expression, he proceeded,—"Sir, I have seen a great part of the West Indies, but have found no place comparable to this. All the other Islands are disgraced by slavery. Here,

Sir," with an air of triumph approaching to the ludicrous,—"here we are *all free and equal.* Our king, Sir,"—rising suddenly from his chair, and striking the table violently with an old cocked hat,—"he is one of the best, as well as one of the greatest of men. The whites in the other Islands laugh at him; but,"—he continued, throwing his hat, apparently in great anger, to the farther corner of the room,—"if they knew him, they would find him a superior man to the very best of them. As a proof of this, Sir,"—resuming his seat, and placing his fore-finger in a parallel line with his nose,—"see what he has done: I have never been in Europe; but from all I can learn, you are not better governed there, than we are. Cape Henry, for example,—where will you find a place in which order so strikingly prevails? I have no doubt, Sir, you will be highly gratified with your visit.—In short,"—again rising, elevating his voice as he rose on his feet, and stretching forth his hand, as though about to deliver some weighty saying,—"in short, Sir, this is the country of liberty, and independence: Our motto is, *La Liberté, ou la mort:* and destruction to those who shall ever lift the sword against us. And now, Sir,"—once more resuming his seat, speaking in a half-whispering

tone, with a look of great self-satisfaction,—"let me congratulate you on your arrival."—

In this manner and strain he proceeded, alternately amusing and annoying me, for the good part of an hour; when he suddenly stopped short, rose up in haste,—then added, "Monsieur, je viendrai vous revoir,"—and making so profound a bow as nearly to lose the centre of gravity, probably in gratitude for the patience of his auditor, he departed, and "I saw him no more."

The Haytians are no less remarkable for their false pretensions, than for their loquacity; insomuch that it was difficult to meet with one who, according to his own testimony, did not fill some station, more or less important, in the government or the army. An amusing instance of this peculiarity in their character occurred in the case of a negro, one of my fellow-passengers from the windward Islands to Cape François. During the passage, this man informed me that he had been some time previously in England, whither he was sent by the Haytian government, on matters of great importance; and that on his arrival there he was introduced, to use his own expression, to the great men of that great nation. He named some as his particular friends, especially those

with whom Christophe was in correspondence; at whose houses, he said, he had spent several days, carefully hinting that it was for the purpose of transacting the most important business. He further stated, that he now held a high official situation in Hayti, which gave him great interest with the king, and afforded him every opportunity of exerting himself for the benefit of his fellow-citizens;—a circumstance in which, he was anxious to assure me, he felt the deepest concern. During these communications, which were given in broken English, he made me frequent offers of his services, while I should remain in the Island, and repeatedly promised me an introduction to the king, whom he called his patron and friend.

Notwithstanding his great ignorance, of which he afforded numerous proofs, and the improbability of some parts of his statement; the attentions paid him by the master of the vessel, to whom he was well known, and the possibility that, in Hayti, men of this description might be promoted in the government, induced me to give some credit to his assertions. On our arrival at Cape François, he continued exceedingly friendly; and whenever I met him always renewed his promise of introducing me to his royal master;—a favour which,

I may remark by the way, I did not require from him. Seeing him one day at a distance, while I was conversing with Dupuy, the king's interpreting secretary, I inquired of the baron who he might be; when I learnt, not a little to my surprize, that this self-named agent of the Haytian government had some time before travelled with a gentleman in England, in the capacity of a valet, and that he was now Christophe's *pastry-cook!*

The principal amusements of the Haytians were music and dancing, of which negroes, in general, are known to be passionately fond. It was no unusual thing, in walking through the streets of Cape François in the evening, to hear the sound of the violin, or the flute, or some other instrument; and to see small parties, assembled at the house of a common friend, indulging in their favourite exercise. In some parts of the town this was the constant method of spending their leisure. Such was the case in the house opposite my own, in which lived a negro, one of the inferior officers of the army, who had married a woman of colour. Having learnt to play very imperfectly on the violin, it was the daily practice of this man, on his return from duty, to entertain himself and his friends with music, invariably

playing one short tune, in which his wife, with a strong harsh voice, generally accompanied him. From the recurrence of the words *La liberté, la gloire,* and similar expressions, the song evidently related to these popular topics; and the air, which was beautifully simple and striking, appeared, from its frequent repetition, to be a favourite one with the parties.

Their national festivals were, however, the chief seasons of amusement and hilarity; the first of which commemorated the expulsion of the French army, and the establishment of independence: the second celebrated the formation of the Haytian monarchy: and three others were held in honour of the birth-days and coronation of their majesties. The celebration of these festivals, while it afforded the Haytians an opportunity of engaging in their favourite amusements, was no less calculated, by reviving in their recollection the most important and interesting transactions of their history, to keep alive those feelings of attachment to liberty and to their sovereign, which tended alike to their safety, tranquillity, and improvement.

It was also the intention of Christophe, that the inhabitants of Cape François should sometimes be entertained with dramatic representa-

tions; for which purpose he directed a new theatre (the old one having been destroyed) to be built at a short distance from the town. It is an oblong edifice, composed chiefly of wood, entirely destitute of ornament; and stands on a rising ground, to the right of the main road, having in front the harbour, and behind it the hills which overlook the Cape. But though it was sufficiently well adapted to answer the purpose for which it was erected, it was very rarely used; insomuch that it was not once opened during my stay in the Island. For the people not being prepared to derive much amusement from the French drama, felt no interest in witnessing the performance of any piece, except that written by De Vastey. At the same time, none but Dukes, Counts, and Barons were qualified to be the *Dramatis Personæ;* and these men deemed it beneath their dignity to descend to the capacity of players, unless at the instance of their master.

Among the customs which may be considered in some degree peculiar to the Haytians, was their mode of lamenting the death of their friends. In attending any of them to the grave, it was the common practice of the men to groan aloud, though it was sufficiently evident

that they often felt no real sorrow; while the women, whose feelings were more powerfully excited, screamed violently and tore their hair, expostulating with the Virgin Mary for not having prolonged the life of the deceased.

I witnessed, among others, one instance of this practice somewhat remarkable, on the death of a young Englishman. He had accompanied his father to St. Domingo at an early age, and had the misfortune to lose him not long after his arrival. Being thus left an orphan in a strange country, he was taken into the house of an English merchant at Cape François, by whom he was treated with great kindness, which he repaid in some measure by his obliging and amiable deportment. While taking a ride, one morning, he was thrown from his horse; and though a slight bruise was the only injury he at first appeared to have sustained from the fall, the alarm he experienced was the occasion, it was thought, of producing a fever, of which he died two days after the accident. Among those who attended his funeral, were some mulatto women at whose house he had lodged with his father, and who had thus known him from the time of his arrival. As the corpse was carried through the streets towards the burial ground,

these women alternately wept, moaned, and screamed, as though in an agony of grief; insomuch that even the natives could not help expressing their surprize. While the service was reading over the body, two of them became violent: they uttered the most doleful cries, the tears poured down their faces, and they lifted their eyes to heaven, with an expression of countenance that seemed to charge the Arbiter of life and death with injustice, in suddenly cutting off one so young and so amiable. As the body was let down into the grave, they fell on their faces to the ground, where they lay motionless, groaning as though their grief was too big for utterance, till the grave was closed, and the company dispersed; when some of their acquaintance, who strove in vain to comfort them, led them back to their home.

On the death of a person of distinction, in whom the public felt interested, another custom obtained; an instance of which occurred on the decease of an officer, at a short distance from my residence. On the evening of the day on which he died, a party of women seated themselves in front of the house where he lay, and began chanting a sort of funeral dirge, the most melancholy that can be imagined. It celebrated the good qualities, real

or imaginary, of the deceased; deplored his death, and commended his soul to the guardianship of saints and angels. From the plaintive tones in which it was uttered, amidst the darkness and stillness of the night, it seemed as though death were attended with new terrors, and the passage to the grave enveloped in a gloom, deeper even than that in which fancy is wont to shroud it. When, on the following morning, the body was carried to the cemetery, amidst an immense concourse of people, the chanting women were still in attendance; and though frequently interrupted by the deep groans, or loud, sudden screams, of persons in the crowd, they ceased not their mournful song till the corpse was committed to the ground.—

This practice, it was said, was founded on the supposition that the soul, on its separation from the body, hovered in disquietude about it; and the object, it was added, in chanting the dirge, was to lay the troubled spirit to rest.

It remains only to take a view of the state of morals among the Haytians, during the reign of this celebrated chief. And in order to form a correct opinion on this subject, it will be necessary to bear in mind the demoralizing effects of that system to which they

were once subject, as well as the obstacles which obstructed their improvement, subsequently to their emancipation. For the inquiry is not, whether they may be compared, in point of morality, to nations which have long enjoyed the benefits of freedom, civilization, and religion; but whether they were less licentious in their principles, or less vicious in their conduct, than negroes in a state of slavery.

The pernicious effects of that system, on the character and habits of negroes, have been too faithfully traced, and are too generally acknowledged, to require being pointed out in this place. Even its advocates are compelled to admit, that "it is a situation which naturally suppresses some of the best affections of the human heart;" and that to its debasing influence may be attributed many of those vices to which slaves are so strongly addicted. However numerous these vices, or under whatever disgusting form they appear, they constituted as prominent a part in the character of the Haytians, at the era of their emancipation, as they continue to form in that of their less fortunate brethren in the other islands. Subject to so debasing a system, their African propensities grew into confirmed habits; and if at that period they were ignorant, slothful, and

licentious; if they evinced an aversion to any regular employment, a disposition to plunder, and an utter disregard of truth,—these characteristic qualities were either generated by slavery, or strengthened and matured under its fostering influence.

It was also the misfortune of the Haytians, that many of their leading characters continued to feel the effects of this system as powerfully as themselves. The principles of their ruling chief himself, on subjects connected with morality and religion, were understood to be in the highest degree licentious. Though utterly unqualified to form a just opinion of the merits of different systems, because he had neither the leisure, nor the inclination, nor the knowledge it required; he affected to despise all religious dogmas as equally false, calculated only to delude the weak and superstitious, and to serve the purposes of a designing set of men. And however temperate in the pleasures of the table,—for it was expressly remarked that he drank sparingly of wine,—his conduct in other respects, according to general report, would not endure a very strict scrutiny. Many of those also who surrounded Christophe, and assisted in his counsels and government, were unhappily of a similar character. Vain of

their limited acquirements, and resolved on being distinguished from the superstitious vulgar, they held all religions in sovereign contempt, and despised Christianity especially as one of the many systems of priestcraft, by which mankind has been deluded and enslaved. These impious notions they had probably imbibed through their intercourse with French *liberals*, in the early part of their life; and their conduct corresponded with their principles. Impatient of all restraints, and rejecting the distinctions of virtue and vice, as though imaginary, they gave free scope to their base passions, and would suffer no obstacle to oppose their indulgence. One of the Barons, who filled an important office in the state, was known to have no less than six women in keeping; and many of the dukes and counts were equally abandoned.

In addition to the evil example of men in authority, the Haytians were utterly destitute of the means of moral instruction. Though the Catholic faith was professedly the religion of the country, (it being thought necessary, for the sake of appearance, to have some form of religious belief,) yet few of the Romish clergy were found in Hayti; and

during a part of Christophe's reign, a Spanish priest, whom he had invited to the Island, was the sole ecclesiastic in his dominions. This man also, like his patron, was an infidel; and so regardless was he of consistency of conduct, and so confirmed in his unbelief, that he was not ashamed to avow it openly. A professed hypocrite, (if the expression may be allowed,) his object was to obtain wealth and influence; in order to which, he ceased not, till by sophistry he persuaded Christophe of his power to elect him as his archbishop; and at length, by his entreaties, prevailed on him to consent to that measure. Being thus invested, as he thought, with higher prerogatives, he considered himself authorized to select persons to assist him in the discharge of his duties: but as this was done, rather with a view to gratify his vanity and indolence, than from a regard to the religious wants of the people, his choice often fell on men notorious for their ignorance and profligacy. Once a year only, he visited the different towns and districts of his province, accompanied by his assistants, ostensibly for the purpose of baptizing children, and marrying; but in reality for the collection of his fees. His private conduct corresponded with his

principles; and so devoted was he to the pleasures of the table, that his intemperance was proverbial.

Thus destitute of the means of instruction, it is rather a matter of regret, than of surprize, that the Haytians, at this period, were ignorant alike of the doctrines of revelation, and of the duties of morality. Though the majority of the black population were born in the Island, and others, being brought from Africa at an early age, might be supposed, from their long absence, to have forgotten their native superstitions; they still retain many of those notions respecting a Deity and a future world, as well as many of the practices peculiar to the African tribes, which are known to prevail among the negroes of the neighbouring Islands. It was also said, (though I discovered no instance of it) that the professors of that art, so usual among negroes, named *Obeah*, continued their practices among the Haytians also, by whom they were held in constant dread. To these were added vague and incorrect notions of Christianity; which they had derived, during the period of their slavery, from their intercourse with the French. On Sundays the soldiers attended military mass; a ceremony which, under the best regulations, little resembles religious

worship; and which, as it was celebrated in this case, became absolutely a farce. The guards at Cape François, morning and evening, sung their hymn to the Virgin; and a few decrepid old women were occasionally seen kneeling at the entrance of the church, counting their beads, and saying their prayers to their imaginary intercessor and guardian. In short, the religion of the Haytians, if the rites observed by them deserve the name, consisted of a strange mixture of the more absurd ceremonies of the church of Rome, with African superstitions equally absurd and degrading.

Considering this neglect of instruction, with the character of those in power, it might be expected, that few attempts would be made to correct the principles of the people, or to reform their manners. But notwithstanding their own profligacy, the general tranquillity and prosperity were considerations of sufficient weight, to induce them to appoint various regulations with this view. It was thought especially necessary that, as the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes was known to prove detrimental to the increase of the population, the greatest encouragement should be given to marriage. It was in consequence determined, that men of a certain age should be

persuaded to enter that state; that all appointed to hold official situations, of whatever kind, should either be married men, or become so before they should be entitled to the emoluments of their office; and that those who should be discovered to have acted unfaithfully to their marriage vows, should be subject to heavy fines, imprisonment, or loss of rank. To prevent thefts, dishonesty, and drunkenness, suitable laws were enacted; and a police was appointed, consisting of the most active of the soldiers, to apprehend offenders, and bring them to punishment.

But the established habits of the people were powerful obstacles to their moral improvement; and the profligacy of many in authority, rendered them more or less indifferent respecting it: hence these regulations, however judiciously chosen, were carelessly enforced, and in several instances were productive of no salutary effect. Although many were prevailed on, by the encouragement given to marriage, to make trial of a state which, they were assured, would greatly contribute to their happiness; there was but too just ground for believing that few actually abandoned their former practices, or deemed themselves bound, by that act, to abstain from them. Rare were the cases in which

a Haytian, as a husband, was seen, accompanied by his wife, at the head of a numerous and flourishing family. So prevailing, in short, was the licentiousness of the people, and so insensible were they of its consequences, that the mulatto women, who were generally considered the more reputable part of the sex, far from thinking it a dishonour to connect themselves unlawfully with some respectable native or white resident, or from sinking, by their conduct, in the estimation of others, universally sought opportunities of doing so, and considered that the connexion did in some way enhance their respectability. Nor was it unusual with them, if their daughters were left unprovided for, to train them up with similar expectations, without attaching to the practice any degree of moral turpitude, or deeming it in the least disgraceful.

While all classes were thus abandoned in their habits, those engaged in petty merchandize, were notoriously disposed to dishonesty. Of sufficient penetration to discover when they might safely venture on any illegal transaction, they scrupled not to avail themselves of every opportunity of this nature; and on some occasions attempted to cheat, when there was little probability of success, and still less of escaping

detection. As an instance of this propensity, among others which might be easily produced, —a storekeeper, in whose house I lodged for a short time, had the assurance to demand, for the first week, the sum agreed on for the month; and when told that he was not a little mistaken in thinking he might so easily impose on strangers, he replied by demanding the money with increased audacity. Being again positively refused, he proceeded to threaten that if payment were not instantly made, he would lay the matter before a court of justice, not failing to hint that there was a sure method of procuring its sentence in his favour. And nothing but indifference to his demands and threats, and reporting his conduct to one of the barons, could induce him to withdraw his claims, and accept the sum originally agreed on.

On account of this strong propensity to dishonesty among persons in trade, the resident European and American merchants who supplied them with goods, found it necessary to proceed in all their transactions with the utmost caution. Nor was this at all times sufficient. Obliged to give long credit, to submit to irregular pay-

ments, and sometimes to heavy losses, they continually complained of the dissimulation and want of principle among their customers; and were often discouraged by the difficulty of procuring a profit on their wares, by any means adequate to the risk they incurred, and the attention and labour their business required. Although it is probable that they at first formed wrong expectations, thinking that they should be able in a short time to realize handsome fortunes, gained without hazard or difficulty, yet their complaints were but too justly founded; and their disappointments and losses gave many of them just reason to lament that they had ever entered the Island. In short, the mulattoes, (for of these the tradespeople chiefly consisted,) were so utterly destitute of principle in all their transactions with whites, that they considered it no wrong to cheat them whenever an opportunity presented.

This unfortunate propensity was not confined to those immediately engaged in business: instances sometimes occurred among the nobles and officers, who in order to support their extravagance, often acted with equal duplicity and meanness. As an example may serve to give a just idea of their dishonest practices, and the stratagems they devised to cover or

palliate them, the conduct of one of the barons, in a commercial transaction, may be stated.

An English merchant, with whom I was acquainted, having brought a cargo from Holland to Cape François for sale, chiefly with a view of procuring a cargo of produce in return, disposed of a great many articles, and among them, of several pipes of madeira, to this man, on condition of being paid in specie at the end of two months. At the expiration of that period, the merchant directed his agent to send the baron his bill, and to demand payment. But he took no notice of the message, nor manifested any intention of settling his account. After a short time, a second application was made; to which he replied, that if it were agreeable to his creditor, he would pay the amount, in the course of a week, in coffee from his own estates; and would, in that case, immediately give directions to his cultivators to prepare a sufficient quantity for the purpose. As there was no probability that the bill would be paid in money, the merchant, not having completed his cargo, readily agreed to the proposal. But like the former, this engagement also was forgotten; and nothing was heard of the baron or his coffee during the next month. The merchant becoming anxious to wind up

his affairs, and to proceed on his voyage, the bill was sent a third time, accompanied with a request for immediate payment, urged by the consideration that the vessel was preparing to sail. The baron now hoped to attain what at length appeared to have been the object of all his delays, which was to evade payment; and he therefore replied that he knew nothing of the bill, that in fact being engaged in preparations to commence a journey into the interior the following day, by order of his majesty, he had no time whatever to examine it.

A few hours after he gave this reply, the merchant himself met him; who, feeling it necessary to push the matter, to show that he was not to be so easily defrauded of his property, reminded him of his original engagement, told him that he expected the bill to be instantly settled, and assured him firmly that if it were delayed an hour longer, he would demand an interview with the king, and lay the matter before him. Never did a countenance exhibit such a picture of rage as did the baron's at this unexpected address. He was a tall, stout, athletic mulatto; and was one of those who indulged the fiercest hatred towards the whites. Determined if possible to intimidate the man

who had dared to address him with so much firmness, and as he thought, without respect for his person or rank, he fixed his eyes, flaming with rage, full on him; and calling him by some abusive epithet, threatened to imprison him for what he termed his insolence, and to kick him from his presence if he did not instantly withdraw. "Since such is your character," replied the Englishman calmly, "I despise you;—with regard to the transaction in question, rely on it I am not fool enough to be the loser; and as to your threats, try to imprison me if you think it safe, and strike me if you dare. I am prepared for you." The baron could not withstand this reply; and he withdrew, growling as he went, threatening vengeance, yet fearing the consequences of his conduct.

But the matter was brought to a more speedy termination than either of the parties anticipated; for shortly after this rencounter, the ship of the late Sir Home Popham, who while on the Jamaica station occasionally visited Cape François, entered the harbour; and the enraged and dishonest baron, well knowing that the Admiral would hear of this affair, and dreading to what it might lead, should it through him reach the ears of Christophe, immediately sent

a part of his bill in cash, and engaged to pay the balance in coffee, which he was careful to do the following morning.—It is but justice, however to add, that instances of this nature occurred among the more profligate nobles only; and to state particularly, that the majority were men of better principles than to engage in any dishonest transactions, and would have disdained to employ their influence for the purpose of defrauding others.

But while, on the one hand, the Haytians in general were so little disposed to that abstinence which preserves the decency of civil intercourse, and while the tradespeople in particular, —who however formed an inconsiderable portion of the population,—were addicted to fraudulent practices; on the other hand, the bulk of the people were no less remarkable for temperance in diet, and for the few indications they manifested of that disposition to pilfer, for which, it is said, slaves are notorious. The labouring classes, both cultivators and mechanics, whose victuals consisted of cassava, fruit, coffee, and milk, and occasionally of bread and animal food, were as abstemious in their habits as those of any other country. So little were they addicted to the vice of drunkenness, that

an intoxicated negro was rarely seen. Even in their hours of amusement and hilarity, when, in addition to music and dancing, the social cup went round, they were seldom known to pass the bounds of temperance, however tempting the opportunity for doing so. Thus the example of the more profligate nobles and barons, though calculated, as far as its influence extended, to produce the most pernicious effects, proved less injurious, in this instance, to the morals of the people, than could have been anticipated from their general character. And as the means of indulgence were accessible to all,—for wine and rum especially may be obtained in Hayti at prices exceedingly low,—it would be difficult to account for their freedom from intemperate habits, were it not known that in tropical climates, such habits being peculiarly dangerous to life, the inclination to indulge in them is less powerfully felt than in milder regions.

At the same time, their disposition to petty thefts, which showed itself frequently during their slavery, was rapidly disappearing from among them; as a proof of which, cases of this nature brought into the courts of justice were exceedingly rare. Whatever were their subjects of dispute, they seldom implied theft or

dishonesty; and among the numerous matters which engaged the attention of the judges, or required their interference, none, it was said, were less frequent than charges of larceny. The improvement of the Haytians, in this particular instance, though somewhat less striking than in others, was in fact equally certain and important; and is to be ascribed, partly to the circumstance that great numbers being possessed of property, and all having a fair opportunity of acquiring it, there was on this account less inducement to pilfer; and partly to the regulations of their king, which provided that whenever a case of robbery occurred, no pains should be spared in discovering the offender, nor any pity be shown him in inflicting the punishment he deserved.

The most flagrant case of this nature which I recollect to have happened during my residence at Cape François, was that of a negro, who during the night entered the house in which I lodged, and carried off several articles of plate. Nor would this in all probability have occurred, had not a door of the house been left insecure, by which the depredator was tempted to enter. But so active were the police, in detecting the thief, and so prompt was the *juge-de-paix* in administering

justice, that he was discovered the following morning with some of the articles in his possession, and condemned to imprisonment and a scanty allowance of food for life. This sentence, it may be remarked, was sufficiently severe, had the offence been of a more aggravated nature; for besides the privation of liberty, which a Haytian dreaded as much as the loss of life, the cell in which this man was destined to spend the remainder of his days, being one of those appropriated to notorious offenders, was narrow, gloomy, and destitute of every thing except a few dry cane-leaves for the prisoner's bed.

The honesty of upper servants, on whom the charge of the household affairs frequently devolved, requires particular notice; especially as it has been stated that some parts of their conduct, however harmless, were to foreigners intolerably annoying. Having generally a sum of money at their disposal, for the purchase of provisions and other necessary articles, they were most scrupulous in rendering an exact account of the manner in which it was expended; and however easy it might have been to deliver a false statement, or to appropriate to their own use any part of the sums entrusted to them, I do not recollect a single instance of

their being detected in an attempt to defraud. In short, to suspect them of employing such sums for their own purposes exceedingly distressed them; and I witnessed an instance of extreme wretchedness from a suspicion of this nature, which though apparently just at the time, was afterwards found to be groundless.

As a further proof of this trait in their character,—during a severe attack of the fever, which confined me to my bed for some time, when a negro servant had the charge of my rooms, and a negro surgeon was one of my medical attendants, not a single article of any kind was stolen. Had they been disposed to pilfer, they had the most favourable opportunity for doing so, with little probability of detection. But on my recovery, I found every thing in the same state in which I had left it at the beginning of my illness; insomuch that nothing was wanting nor even misplaced. Nor can I omit this opportunity of recording the honesty, and unwearied attention of a negro servant who remained with me during that long and dangerous illness. To this gloomy period, (if I may be forgiven for the digression,) my mind often reverts with a kind of melancholy pleasure. At a distance from those friends whose sympathies in the hour of sickness are so consolatory,—a stranger

among strangers,—at a period when the fever was carrying off one or more of the few white residents daily,—often suffering excruciating pain, and reduced to the lowest state of debility,—when all hope of recovery had vanished, and my medical adviser hourly expected my death,—how valuable were the unremitting attentions, the unceasing kindness, and the sincere sympathies of a negro attendant! How valuable, I trust I shall never be so ungrateful as to forget.

On the whole, if the state of morals among the Haytians was in some respects corrupt,—a circumstance to be deeply regretted,—in others, it was gradually and effectually improving. They still laboured, it is true, under many disadvantages; but they enjoyed, in addition to their liberty, the benefits of a government peculiarly adapted to their character. They chose their employments, and enjoyed the fruits of their industry; they submitted to the laws, and received the protection afforded by them; and though their chief grew more intolerant, the longer he exercised supreme power, there was little reason to fear that his sway would ever become despotic, and no danger of their allowing it to remain so. Thus the condition of the Haytians, when contrasted

with that of slaves, was already become an enviable one; and the advantages they had derived from their emancipation, by practically teaching them the value of liberty, constituted an ample reward for their past exertions in its defence, and furnished them with the strongest motive for still guarding it against the encroachments of their chiefs, and the designs of their former oppressors.

XII.

SENTIMENTS OF THE HAYTIANS TOWARDS WHITES:—CONDITION OF EUROPEANS AND AMERICANS AT CAPE FRANÇOIS.

THE preceding account of the Haytians under Christophe may serve, it is hoped, to give a correct idea of their condition and character, during his reign. But it would still be imperfect, were we not to state the sentiments they entertained towards whites in general, and towards the French in particular.

From the beginning of the early commotions down to this period, the Haytians had cherished their hatred of France so warmly and steadily, that it had become one of the most conspicuous features in their character. As their love of liberty was enthusiastic, so their aversion to that nation, which had so long deprived them of it, was unconquerable; and these feelings were so blended, that some have affirmed that their attachment to freedom consisted in nothing more than a detestation of the French name and government. But though

this was an evident mistake,—for they were ever tenacious of their rights, and capable of enjoying those privileges which chiefly distinguish free-men from slaves,—yet their love of liberty and their aversion to France, were so closely associated in their minds, as never to exhibit themselves distinctly from each other. Whenever they declared how highly they prized their liberty, and what sacrifices they were prepared to make in order to maintain it, they failed not to add some expression as strongly indicative of their abhorrence of those who had formerly held them in bondage.

But their hatred of the French, it cannot be denied, was too justly founded. The recollection of the injuries they had endured while in slavery, could not fail to inspire them with fierce indignation towards those by whom they had been inflicted; and the cruelties they had subsequently experienced from the same people, while contending for their liberty, served to render it more deep and lasting. Many of their companions in that contest, whose conduct in any other cause would have been considered, even by slave-holders, as generous, faithful and brave, had been coolly and barbarously massacred as traitors and rebels. The fate of Toussaint especially they could never

forget. He was the first and ablest of their generals; qualified to direct alike in the senate and the field; to whose talents and exertions they were deeply indebted for their freedom; whose loss they bitterly deplored, and whose memory they never ceased to cherish. The baseness and treachery connected with his seizure, the excessive cruelty with which he was treated during his passage to Europe, the rigours of his subsequent imprisonment, and the mystery in which the circumstances of his death were involved, made an impression on the minds of the Haytians never to be effaced; and while at the period of that disgraceful transaction, it roused them to those exertions which terminated in the expulsion of their enemies, it rendered them ever afterwards more fiercely enraged against the authors of their wrongs, than all the injuries and cruelties they had previously endured.

Nor were these feelings confined to any one class of Haytians. Those who had passed the early part of their lives in slavery, could never forget the hardships of their bondage, nor the injustice of those who had enslaved them; others, born during the contests with the French, had been trained up in hatred of their very name; the young were still taught to consider them as the relentless enemies of their

race, bent on depriving them of their rights or their existence, and only waiting for a favourable opportunity to effect their unjust purposes: and thus all ranks and ages united in regarding them as their principal foes, and in holding them in utter abhorrence. Christophe was among the first to cherish this aversion to France, and he avowed it on every occasion. But this was not without special reason; for he had severely suffered, in his family, from the perfidy and blind policy of that nation towards Hayti, particularly in the following instance.

On the conclusion of the short peace between Toussaint and Le Clerc,[1] Christophe being desirous that his eldest son, then nine years of age, should be educated in a manner suited to his prospects, confided him to the care of general Boudet, who was returning to France. At the same time, he placed a sum of money in the hands of that officer, sufficient to defray the expences of his son's maintenance and education, hoping to see him one day return, instructed in every necessary branch of learning, and thus qualified to promote the welfare of his country. But this was a vain hope, for the cruelty of the French had otherwise or-

[1] See p. 71.

dained; and this unfortunate boy, instead of being carefully provided for, educated, and sent back to his parents, was abandoned to hunger and cold and misery; and at length died, neglected, in the Orphan Asylum at Paris.[1]

To other causes of aversion therefore was added, in the case of Christophe, that of deep personal injury; and the indignation he felt, in common with others, had in consequence, settled into an inveterate rancour. He would never cease, he declared, to cherish his hatred of France, nor remit his endeavours to inspire his subjects with an abhorrence as deep and as lasting as his own. Through no indifference on his part should it happen that they forgot the treacheries and blood-thirsty deeds of that nation; his constant aim should be to increase and perpetuate the rage which a sense of their wrongs had long ago enkindled; nor should the name of France, associated as it was with the recollection of so many injuries, be ever uttered among them but with execrations.

From feelings such as these, cherished equally by the Haytians and their chiefs, arose

[1] De Vastey states that the children of other chiefs, sent to France to be educated, were treated with similar cruelty, and came to the same untimely end.

those opprobious epithets which they were accustomed to heap upon the French. "The most abominable tyrants,"—"treacherous and inhuman whites,"—"tygers in human form,"—were the phrases they commonly employed to denote their opinion of that people. Nor were they less violent than firm, in declaring their resolution never to submit again to their authority, nor to acknowledge their claims. "Jurons à l'univers entier," was their language on this occasion, "à la posterité, à nous-mêmes, de renoncer à jamais à la France, et de mourir plutôt que de vivre sous sa domination. Paix à nos voisins;—*mais anathéme au nom François,—haine eternelle à la France.*" After the negotiation with the French commissioners of Louis XVIII, in 1814,—of which an account will be given hereafter,[1]—a strong and decided avowal of their determination was contained in a decree published on that occasion, wherein, among other things, it was positively declared, that they would hold no intercourse with France, nor permit any of that nation to enter the Island; at least till its independence should be definitively acknowledged by the government.

[1] Pp. 363—379.

But France had hitherto persisted in refusing to make that acknowledgment. The government still indulged the idea that some favourable opportunity would occur for recovering so valuable a colony; the ex-colonists looked wistfully at the mention of St. Domingo, determined never to abandon the hope of regaining their lost possessions; the journalists spoke of the Island as though it still formed a part of the French empire; and pamphlets were published, especially after the return of the Bourbon family to the throne, proposing schemes, some for subduing and chastizing its inhabitants, and others for regulating its internal government. But while one party recommended that, for this purpose, a force should be sent thither sufficient to overpower the negroes, and awe them into submission; and another, supposing it more politic, advised that conciliatory measures should be pursued; all united in considering the Haytians as rebels, in ridiculing their institutions, despising their pretensions to establish a government for themselves, and treating their claims to independence with contempt. The policy of the French government and of the ex-colonists, circumstanced as the Island now was, must have appeared to others as ill-judged, as their

hopes of recovering it were fallacious; and while the writings of their politicians excited the ridicule of the Haytians, both served to confirm them in the antipathy which so many occurrences had conspired to create.

Under these circumstances, it was dangerous for a Frenchman to appear in Christophe's territories; and so, in one instance, it unfortunately proved. Shortly after the publication of the decree which prohibited the French from entering the Island, two of them incautiously landed at Cape François; where, instead of communicating their intentions, or engaging in any pursuit, they spent the greater part of their time in conversing with the natives. It was impossible for them to escape the observation of a ruler so jealous and suspicious as was Christophe at this time; and not long after their arrival, they were seized by the police, deprived of their papers, and thrown into prison. Though their conduct seemed to afford ground for suspicion, nothing was found to convict them of any treacherous designs; while they strongly protested their innocence, and begged permission to quit the Island.

Christophe, however, turning a deaf ear to all their entreaties, determined on detaining them in prison till something should transpire to

decide their fate, and warrant him either in dismissing them uninjured, or in treating them as the spies and agents of the ex-colonists. But his impatience, in this instance, overcame his resolution; for having concluded that, since there was a degree of mystery connected with their case, some villainous design must have brought them thither, he forthwith gave orders that they should be executed. And in obedience to his commands, these unfortunate men were carried, by a party of soldiers, to a spot in the suburbs of the Cape, and, in presence of an immense multitude who had collected together on the occasion, were shot on the ground on which the blood of their countrymen had often before been poured forth.

Very different, however, were the sentiments entertained by Christophe and his subjects towards whites of other nations, whether of Europe or America. Though the former, in some instances, still maintained the slave-trade; none, they considered, except France, had injured them, either by opposing their attempts to recover their liberty, or by molesting them after it was secured. America, they conceived, not only offered them an example of successful resistance in the assertion of independence,

to which they were accustomed to refer in defending their claims against those of the French: but she had also, they believed, tacitly approved of the measures they had pursued with a view to that object, and by her readiness to establish a commercial intercourse, directly encouraged them therein. The English, however, from the liberal spirit of their constitution, and their desire to ameliorate the condition of negroes in general, were considered by the Haytians to be more friendly to their cause, and more sincerely interested in their prosperity, than any other nation.[1] They professed to consider them as the protectors of their race, and the defenders of the rights of men; and for this reason, conceived they were bound to respect them above all others. But it was easy to perceive, that in their preference of the

[1] "L'Angleterre est la principale puissance de l'Europe qui s'est vraiment interessée à notre sort. C'est elle qui a pris l'initiative sur les autres puissances, pour faire abolir la traite et qui travaille à améliorer le sort des esclaves. C'est elle qui par un ordre en Conseil, nous a considéré comme neutres et indépendens, et a expédié directement et legalement ses vaisseaux de commerce pour Hayti. Nous serions donc les plus ingrats et les plus injustes des hommes, si nous pouvions jamais manquer de reconnaissance envers le peuple et le gouvernment Anglais."—*De Vastey, Réflexions politiques*, p. 39.

English, they were influenced partly by reasons of policy. For as their independence was of the highest importance to their safety and prosperity, they hoped that the British government might be induced to acknowledge it; and since in the event of its recognition by so great a power, they naturally calculated on the most solid advantages, they omitted no opportunity of testifying their respect for the nation, nor any method that seemed calculated to excite a more powerful interest in their favour.

In proof of Christophe's desire to conciliate the English, and of the sincerity of his avowed determination to refrain from all interference with their colonies, the following circumstance, which occurred during the contests with Petion, may be stated. "Some restless spirits, in the southern part of St. Domingo, had opened a clandestine correspondence with various disaffected persons in Jamaica, with a view to disturb the tranquillity of that Island. This intrigue was detected by the sagacity and vigilance of Christophe, who immediately arrested the parties concerned in the conspiracy. The British ministry were so well pleased with this demonstration of integrity, that they

issued an order in council, in February 1807, permitting English merchantmen bound for Buenos Ayres and La Plata, to dispose of their cargoes in any port of St. Domingo, which was not subject to France or Spain, to ship the produce of the country, and either to return with their investments to any part of the united kingdom, or to place them on board the vessels of neutrals, for the purpose of selling them in the foreign settlements of hostile powers: and the owners of the cargoes were suffered to bring the proceeds of them in the neutral ships to any harbour in Great Britain or Ireland. This act of the British government showed the sense they entertained of Christophe's honourable conduct, and at the same time most materially assisted the commercial views of the Haytians, while it revived, in no small degree, the depressed enterprize of British merchants, and thus proved highly beneficial to all parties."[1]

For these reasons, so far was Christophe from prohibiting whites in general from entering his territories, as in the case of the French, that he was desirous of their settling there,

[1] History of St. Domingo, p. 348.

and encouraged them to do so, by all the inducements he deemed it safe to offer. Few, however, could be prevailed upon to become settled residents in his dominions; for their number seldom amounted to a hundred. They consisted of English, Germans, and Americans; and were engaged, some in mercantile pursuits, others as medical practitioners,[1] and the remainder in the employ of the Haytian government. The majority lived at Cape François, as the place most favourable to their objects; but the restraints to which they were subject, however necessary they appeared to Christophe, often rendered their situation intolerably disagreeable.[2]

[1] Among the European surgeons who resided at Cape François, during my stay at that place, was the late Mr. J. Birt; a gentleman of acknowledged skill in his profession. Should these pages happen to fall into the hands of his friends, it may be gratifying to them to learn, from one well acquainted with him when in Hayti, that his constant attention to his patients, his sympathy and humanity, and his readiness to serve them, during their illness, in affairs not connected with his profession, gained him the esteem and confidence of all who had occasion for his assistance. Though foreign to the object of these Sketches, I am happy in having this opportunity of acknowledging my obligation to the talents and kindness of the individual, through whose means I was snatched from the grave.

[2] In the latter part of 1819, Sir Gregor M'Gregor visited

Among these regulations was one which directed that all whites, on their arrival at Cape François, should be required, previously to their landing, to give up all letters and papers

Cape François. At that time he had a small, fast-sailing schooner in his service, manned chiefly with Spaniards, and having a field-piece mounted on her deck. He remained at the Cape several months, during which he received great attention from the resident merchants, many of whom he prevailed on to make purchases of certain lands in *Poyais*, calling them after their names. I know not what may have been Sir Gregor's particular object at this time; but he appeared earnestly desirous that, among others, a young Englishman, then residing at the Cape, would accompany him to the country of which he professed himself the chief. For this purpose, he described *Poyais* to him as a country possessing every advantage in point of climate, soil, and productions: and the inhabitants as a race so inoffensive, gentle and submissive, that they might be perfectly civilized in a twelvemonth. With the same view, he promised to bestow on his young friend the first and most lucrative offices in the government he was preparing to establish there;—in fact, to constitute him next in rank and authority to himself. Wearied at length by the general's repeated and pressing invitations, the Englishman replied, "Sir Gregor, do you think me a fool, or a madman? Whichever you suppose me, I am utterly unfit to accompany you. If you consider me neither, you surely cannot believe that I could for a moment listen seriously to your proposals." This reply so far silenced the adventurous *Cacique* that he gave him no further trouble.

in their possession, in order to be examined at the government office, before permission should be granted them to reside there. Another regulation, equally disagreeable, ordained that the foreign residents should not be permitted to go more than three miles into the interior; so that they were prevented from seeing any more of the country, than the parts in the immediate vicinity of the town. A still more vexatious restraint was imposed on them, a short time before Christophe's death. It is well known that in the West Indies, the evening, on account of its cooling and refreshing breezes, is the safest and most pleasant part of the day for taking exercise. But foreigners were no longer permitted to enjoy their usual rambles, by a prohibition that none should pass the barriers of the town, after the sun had retired behind the neighbouring mountain.

This latter restraint appeared as unnecessary as it was felt to be vexatious; and two English residents in the employ of the Haytian government, being desirous of ascending part of the mountain behind the Cape, determined on one occasion to resist the guard, and thus make their way to the spot. The soldiers, however, being armed, proved too powerful for them; for having stopped their horses, they compelled

both riders to dismount, and bringing them back to the town, placed them in confinement till morning. Than this, nothing could be more provoking. Unable to acquaint their friends with their situation, they were under the necessity of passing the whole night in the common prison, surrounded by negro criminals. The following day, Christophe, having called them before him, demanded for what reason they had attempted to violate a regulation which they well knew had for some time been established?

Undaunted by the failure of their plan, and by the menacing tone and look of the personage before whom they stood, they replied, that wishing to visit the mountain, the evening, he knew, was to them the most convenient and pleasant part of the day for that purpose; that they must be allowed, while they remained in the Island, to take their accustomed exercise; that if he could not place sufficient confidence in them, as Englishmen, to allow them to visit the spots in the neighbourhood, but must treat them as if they had been spies, he could not consistently permit them, or any other white residents, to remain in his territories; and that as to the regulation in question, to be brief and explicit, they deemed it unnecessary and

absurd.—This was language to which Christophe had not been accustomed, and which he was little prepared to hear. But checking his resentment, and perhaps deeming their confinement a sufficient punishment for their temerity, he charged them to beware how they treated, in future, that or any other regulation which he thought proper to establish, and dismissed them.

But while these circumstances naturally served to annoy the white residents, there were others calculated to render their situation less unpleasant; among which was the civility they experienced from the natives. For though the Haytians, being now a free and independent people, considered themselves, on that account, on a perfect equality with all others; they still felt the inferiority to whites which their disadvantages had created, and involuntarily paid them that deference which men are accustomed to show their superiors. And this attention to foreign residents they were wont to testify in various ways. They made it especially their constant practice never to pass them without saluting them in a manner at once friendly and respectful. In conversation, whether on business or on passing events, their address,

though familiar and accompanied by much grimace, was at all times complaisant. In addition to which, they readily complied with any requests for their assistance, and frequently made voluntary offers of their services. The English especially, to whom they were directed to show marked respect, received proofs of their friendly disposition and readiness to serve them, as agreeable as they were often unexpected. Nor were these trifling attentions on the part of the Haytians, when considered in connexion with the rudeness which might be expected from a half civilized people, and the actual restraints to which foreigners were subject, to be altogether despised.

Another circumstance peculiarly agreeable to the foreign residents, was the occasional visits which the late Sir Home Popham, while on the Jamaica station, made to Cape François. For as one of the Admiral's objects was to ascertain whether they continued to receive the protection of the king and the government, they seldom failed to obtain, either by the effect of his presence among them, or by his direct interference, redress for such grievances as they had previously complained of in vain. In thus benefiting the European residents,

and affording them a proof of the interest which the Admiral felt on their account, these visits were singularly gratifying; and as they served, at the same time, to produce in the minds of the natives a favourable impression towards the whites, they also tended to ensure a continuance of their peaceable and respectful behaviour.

Another of Sir Home's objects, it may be remarked, was probably to observe the state of Christophe's subjects, and to mark what progress they were making in civilization. But whether this were the case or not, the negro king, anxious that the British Admiral should receive the most favourable impression of the state of the government, was careful to treat him with the greatest possible respect. While he remained on shore, one of the largest and best furnished houses at the Cape was appropriated to his use; his officers experienced every attention from the black and mulatto nobility, and all ranks were anxious to show their respect to their visitors. On the departure of the Admiral, his ship was supplied with every kind of provision which the Island produced; and the people hastened to bring their fowls, fruits, and other presents, entreating that they might be received, and be considered

as proofs, however trifling, of their great respect for the British nation.

But whatever the advantages or disadvantages of Europeans, the frequent unhealthiness of Cape François, at which place the majority resided, was alone sufficient to deter many from becoming settled residents. Though that place is generally considered, from its situation, one of the most healthy spots in the Island, experience does not appear to favour the opinion. During my stay there, few places suffered more severely from the prevalence of those diseases which are incidental to the climate. So dreadful were the ravages at one period especially, among the natives as well as the whites, that the latter, during several weeks, were kept in a state of constant alarm; and many were induced, with a view to their safety, to remove to other parts of the Island. Of those who remained, the majority were attacked with the fever; and so fatal did it in many instances prove, that in the short space of six or seven weeks, above two thirds of their number were carried to the grave. In our own country, which is happily free from the frequent prevalence of contagious diseases, we cannot easily form an idea of the melancholy which prevails, during such seasons of sickness, in

tropical climates; increased, as it often is, by cases of mortality, impressive and afflictive above the common lot.

An American, who was unfortunately addicted to drunkenness, was at length so abandoned to that vice, as to be continually in a state of intoxication. His affairs being thus neglected, and his property wasted, when he fell a victim to the fever,—for it was impossible for one of his habits of intemperance to escape, —scarcely a sufficient sum of money was left to defray the trifling expences of his funeral. But the instant his death was known, one of his countrymen, to whose kindness he had been often indebted, undertook to make the necessary arrangements for his interment, and generously engaged to pay whatever expences might attend it. He was a young man, healthy and strong, temperate in his mode of living, and fitted, by his habits, to contend with the diseases of the climate. While following the corpse to the burial-ground, his friends, who accompanied him, perceived that he was unusually gloomy; and when he stood at the side of the grave, he wept and sobbed aloud. They knew not to what cause to attribute this sorrow, for his acquaintance with the deceased was neither intimate nor of long standing;

but they little thought that it would be their mournful duty, on the following evening, to lay him by the side of his unfortunate countryman, another victim to the prevailing disease. No sooner had he retired to his lodgings, on his return from the funeral, than he perceived that he had been seized with the fever, and in a few hours he was no more.

But among the numerous instances of this melancholy nature, none were more affecting than the misfortunes which befel the members of a mercantile house, the principals of which were Germans. They had established themselves at Cape François, soon after Christophe ascended the throne; and for their integrity, and their readiness to accommodate the native tradespeople, were equally respected by him, and the resident merchants in general. During a very sickly season, a young German, who was related to them, arrived at the Cape with a cargo for their disposal. He was in the bloom of youth, full of activity, and fearless of the disease which was then prevailing. But while attending the discharge of the ship, he was suddenly attacked by the fever; and though his constitution was prepared to resist its effects for a while, it at last sunk under its violence, and

in less than a fortnight after his arrival, he was carried to the grave. One of the partners, a man distinguished for his freedom from those vices into which Europeans, when in those climates, too commonly fall, was immediately after taken ill of the same disease, and survived his young friend only a few days. An American, whom they employed as an assistant and respected for his honesty and diligence, though said to be unusually temperate, next fell a victim to the fatal distemper.

The remaining partner was thus left desolate. But he bore these losses with exemplary patience, evincing a degree of fortitude which few, in circumstances so melancholy, are found able to exert. He attended to his affairs, now devolving wholly on himself, with his accustomed diligence; his health appeared to continue firm, and his spirits but little impaired; insomuch that his friends, who at first feared he would be unable to bear up under losses so sudden and mournful, began to hope that he at least would survive. These hopes, however, were fallacious. About ten days after the death of his partner, he suddenly grew ill, while retiring to rest, of the same disease which had proved so fatal to his friends; and the next day, by noon, he was a corpse.—

But it is unnecessary to furnish more instances of the great mortality of Cape François; or to dwell on circumstances which, though associated in my own mind with many affecting considerations, would probably be destitute of interest to others.

XIII.

VIEW OF THE REPUBLIC OF HAYTI:—LAST ATTEMPTS OF FRANCE TO RECOVER THE COLONY:—CHARACTER AND DEATH OF PETION.

BEFORE I enter on the principal subject of this chapter, it may be necessary to state that, not having had an opportunity of visiting the southern districts of Hayti, where the nature of Petion's proceedings and the state of his people might have been best ascertained, the information I have to communicate on these subjects was procured from others, and is consequently of a very general nature. Imperfect, however, as it may appear, it may be relied on for its accuracy;—the persons from whom I obtained it, having, during a residence of many years in the Island, frequent occasions of visiting the territories of the southern chief, and of transacting business with the inhabitants. An European in particular, whom I often met at Cape François, had resided a considerable time at Port-au-prince, the capital of Petion's dominions; and as the object of his residence there ren-

dered it necessary for him to procure information respecting the affairs of the republic, his communications to me on that subject were important and satisfactory.

THE opposition of Petion to Christophe, on the election of the latter as the successor of Dessalines, was ostensibly founded on his alleged inability to exercise the supreme command, and the tyranny he was likely to practise towards those who should submit to his authority. Partly, therefore, to maintain consistency of conduct, and partly from the persuasion that a popular form of government would be best adapted to the opinions and character of the people, Petion, in conjunction with his principal partizans, proceeded to establish a constitution on the leading principles of a republic. But of this constitution it is necessary to state only, that having made the necessary arrangements, it was finally determined, that the executive power should be placed in the hands of a president, to which office Petion was elected with the unanimous consent of the people and the army; that this office should be held by him for life; and that he should pos-

sess the power of nominating his successor, from among the generals of the army or the principal officers of the state, by whom the election should be afterwards confirmed. It was further resolved, that though no titles of nobility should be adopted, there should be the usual gradations of military rank, and an impartial distribution of administrative offices. At the same time, such regulations were established as appeared necessary for the maintenance of order, the discipline of the army, the administration of justice, the defence of the republic, the advancement of agriculture and commerce, and the general improvement of the people; all of them corresponding with the liberal principles of the constitution.

The seat of the republican government was Port-au-prince,[1] a place next in magnitude and importance to Cape François. It is situated towards the south-western extremity of the Island, at the farther end of a beautiful bay, along the borders of a plain of great extent, which is bounded on each side by mountains of prodigious altitude. But though built on a similar plan to the capital of the northern dis-

[1] This place has, since the death of Christophe, become the capital of the Island.

tricts, especially in the width and regularity of its streets, it is greatly inferior to that place in its buildings, the greater part of the houses consisting entirely of wood. And besides being in many parts in a state of ruin, its southern aspect, and the flat swampy grounds in its immediate neighbourhood, render it one of the most unhealthy places in the Island.

During the time that Petion was employed in supporting his pretensions against Christophe, the condition of his people was necessarily neglected; but from the period that hostilities between them were suspended, he engaged as actively and as perseveringly as his opponent, in forming plans of civilization and general improvement. As chief of the southern districts of the Island, he proceeded in such a manner as to secure him the continued attachment of his people, and to place his authority, though more limited than that of the northern chief, on a surer, he hoped, and more permanent foundation. He laboured with unwearied assiduity to establish order and subordination among the people; and knowing their firm and enthusiastic attachment to liberty, and at the same time their unfitness to possess it in its full extent, he endeavoured to introduce such regulations as he hoped

would be neither too severe on the one hand, nor too mild on the other. And being especially desirous of retaining the high opinion which his people had formed of his abilities and character, he studiously avoided whatever would tend to lessen his popularity; never attempting to effect any alteration in the government, either for the purpose of extending his power, or enabling him to cope more effectually with his rival.

Though raised to the first rank in the republic, and possessing a degree of authority which few chiefs would have known how to exercise with moderation, he preserved the same amiableness of deportment, and the same readiness to interest himself in the welfare of others, which he had shown when holding a subordinate station in the army. Unlike Christophe, who affected all the parade and splendour of royalty, and rendered it often difficult even for men in office to approach him,—Petion was at all times accessible, waved all unnecessary ceremony, and considered the title of president, which his adherents had conferred on him, as one of sufficient merit and distinction. In the affairs of the government, especially in those relating to agriculture and commerce, he was indefatigably and constantly

employed; nor would he, in the administration of justice, allow the cases of individuals which required his notice to be determined by others, unless the multiplicity of his engagements rendered it absolutely necessary. In short, he affected no pomp, required no greater degree of respect than he felt assured his exertions had merited, and his subjects would voluntarily pay him; nor evinced any interest in matters which did not relate, either directly or indirectly, to the improvement of his country, and the happiness of the people.

While, therefore, by his talents, exertions, and manners, Petion had acquired, previously to his becoming President, a degree of popularity not exceeded even by that of Toussaint; his subsequent administration of the affairs of the republic, so far from rendering him less popular, caused him, by its mildness, to become the very idol of the people. All joined in praise of his abilities, his moderation, and his devotedness to the good of his country. Those who had been his fellow-officers, and who, it might be supposed, would have been envious of his success, were the first to applaud his proceedings, and to express their admiration of the manner in which he exercised his authority. The army was enthusiastically devoted to his

cause, and was ever ready to defend it against the attempts either of his rival or of France. And the people generally, regarding him as the great defender of their rights, paid him,—to use an expression I heard employed on the occasion,—a degree of respect little short of adoration. Thus Petion required not the pomp affected by Christophe to perpetuate the attachment of his subjects: his character and actions were the surer means of securing,—what next to their prosperity he desired,—their affection for his person, and their approval of his administration.

The solicitude, indeed, which he felt on this account, though in some respect creditable to himself, proved ultimately injurious to the interests of the people. Free from many necessary restraints, they habitually indulged in their vicious propensities; and disregarding even the established laws, often violated them with impunity. There existed, in this instance, a striking difference between them and the people under Christophe;—a difference so obvious as to be perceived by every one who visited their respective territories. Nor were they less distinguished from the subjects of the northern ruler, by their want of subordination to those who held offices in the different departments of the state. No measures having

been taken to correct those false notions of freedom which were originally common to both parties, they were ever disposed, under the influence of opinions so absurd and dangerous, to consider the most necessary regulations as so many unjust encroachments on their liberty, and often thought themselves justified in opposing them with the utmost obstinacy. Hence arose frequent disputes and quarrels, all which tended to disturb the order of things, and to throw additional obstacles in the way of improvement. Towards the white residents also, whom they regarded as belonging to the race that had formerly held them in chains, they frequently showed a strong aversion; and instead of treating them with any sort of respect, exacted from them a kind of homage at once humiliating and absurd. Those possessed of property, and who entertained on that account a high opinion of their importance, would never suffer a foreigner to pass them without requiring from him the accustomed marks of respect; insomuch that if a white man, on meeting them, accidentally omitted to pull off his hat, he was instantly reminded of his neglect by no very friendly salutation, and to avoid more unpleasant consequences, was compelled to submit to the

mortifying custom. Such was said to be the character of the great body of the people.

In the meantime, the soldiers, who composed a large proportion of the population, were in a more improved state; and a degree of subordination prevailed among them which, when compared to the refractory dispositions and irregular conduct of their fellow-citizens, formed a singular and striking contrast. This superiority in the army was attributed partly to the discipline to which they were subject, and partly to the rewards held out as the certain consequence of good conduct. The former, though not so severe as the military discipline of Christophe, was found sufficient to check their turbulence and render them properly submissive to their officers: the latter, consisting of promotion in the army, was flattering to their pride and ambition; and, being the sure way to comparative independence and authority, restrained many of them from pursuing a line of conduct, to which they would otherwise have abandoned themselves.

On the other hand, in their intercourse with the people, the soldiers were selfish, overbearing and violent; and in their conduct towards foreign residents, always disagreeable and oftentimes insolent. In the latter instance, it

may be again remarked, they greatly differed from the soldiers of Christophe, who, it has been stated, evinced the utmost respect towards whites of all nations, the French excepted. In their appearance, the difference between the troops of the rival chiefs was still more striking and extraordinary. For while those of Christophe were plentifully supplied with clothing, those of Petion—if the statement I received from persons who had resided in his capital be not exaggerated,—were destitute in many instances of some of its most necessary articles. If such were the case, it is difficult to say to what cause it is to be attributed. Petion was not wanting in generosity, nor his government in money; and had his army received proper supplies, the love of dress universally prevalent among negroes, would not have declined the gratification.

The insubordination of the inhabitants of the southern part of Hayti, arose partly from Petion's want of courage to establish more severe and salutary laws. However useful the regulations which he, in conjunction with his assistants in the government, had instituted, had he been more resolute and more indifferent to public opinion, he would have unquestionably adopted other measures which, though

of a less popular nature, the condition of the people rendered essentially necessary. His solicitude to preserve his reputation, and his fear lest any of his proceedings should excite a suspicion that he was pursuing designs opposed to liberty, often rendered him cautious without reason, and irresolute to a degree unworthy of his general character. Hence, instead of following the dictates of his own judgment, he too readily conformed to the views of others; and sometimes acceded to their wishes, when convinced that compliance would be injurious to their interests.

The chief source, however, of the disorders which prevailed in the republic, is to be found in the nature of the government itself. This so far limited the powers of the President, as to render him unable to carry some of his most useful plans into effect; at the same time that it provided few of those restraints which negroes required, who were still suffering, in their character and habits, the demoralizing effects of the slave-system. It allowed the President too little authority, and the people too much liberty. Had the influence of the former been greater, and the freedom of the latter placed under proper restriction, the case of Christophe's subjects proves that Petion might have

stood at the head of a people as peaceable, orderly, and submissive to the constituted authorities, as they had formerly been resolute in resisting oppression, and fearless in defending their rights.

In addition to the inefficiency of the government, no adequate provision was made for the instruction of the younger part of the community;—a circumstance which naturally tended to strengthen and perpetuate the vices of the population. Instead of a regular system of education being established, such as should be adapted to the capacities of youth, and would admit of general application; there existed a few private schools only, under the direction of persons whose qualifications, for the most part, were unequal to the task they had undertaken. The system of Bell or of Lancaster would have been peculiarly suited to the circumstances and capacities of the Haytian youth; and if I am rightly informed, a proposal was made, to the leading men of the state, by the British and Foreign School Society, for the introduction of their system into the republic. But though they affected to lament the existing deficiencies, they thought proper to decline the proposal. That Society, unwilling to abandon so desirable

an object because the first attempt had failed of success, and hoping that their system, when once seen in operation, would induce the government to sanction and support it, determined on making a further trial, by sending one of their agents to Port-au-prince for that purpose. But this attempt proved almost as unsuccessful as the former; for the person commissioned by the society, after encountering numerous difficulties, was unable to establish more than one school; and thus the greater part of the rising generation in the republic of Hayti remained destitute of the means of elementary instruction.

But though the government of Petion was inferior, in some respects, to that of Christophe, especially in the provision it made for the establishment of due subordination among the people; in other respects it took the precedency. This was especially the case in regard to the distribution of property; which, either from the liberality of Petion and his leading men, or more probably from circumstances over which they had no control, was so equally divided, that the majority of the people were possessed of small estates, by the produce of which they obtained their livelihood. At the same time, notwithstanding their dis-

position to resist the constituted authorities, they were no less diligent in cultivating the plantations than the subjects of Christophe; so far were they from requiring that compulsion to labour which is necessary, it is said, to conquer the indolence of negroes. With regard to commerce also, Cape François was much inferior to Port-au-prince;—a greater number of cargoes being shipped from the latter place, than at any other town in the Island. Nor was the republic wanting in men of ability and information, qualified to fill the various offices of the government with credit to themselves, and advantage to the state. Such, in particular, was M. Inginace, secretary to the President,—a man well known to Europeans, and much praised for his readiness to assist them. He was described as being shrewd, discerning, and cautious; active in the despatch of business, and devoted to the service of his country.[1]

But although there were many points in which the parties of the two chiefs differed, they agreed in cherishing a violent and un-

[1] This man still retains his office, as secretary to the President; and has also been for some time past, Editor of the Haytian Gazette.

conquerable hatred towards France, and in avowing their determination never to be induced, by any considerations whatever, to submit again to her authority, or to admit the validity of her claims. The sincerity of these declarations was at length put to the test, when on the return of Louis XVIII. to the throne of France, an attempt was made by the government of that country to recover possession of the colony. And since this is the principal event which occurred, during that peaceful and prosperous period in the history of Hayti, and equally involved the safety both of Christophe and Petion, it may be proper in this place to give a brief statement of the measures pursued by the French on that occasion, and the result of the negotiations held by their commissioners with the Haytian chiefs.

Peace being at length restored to Europe, the ex-colonists, who had never ceased to feel and lament their losses, conceived that the opportunity was now arrived for regaining their possessions in St. Domingo; and in the hope of accomplishing an object which appeared to them so desirable, they presented an address to the Chamber of Deputies, calling its attention to the state of the Island, and praying

that measures might be forthwith adopted for subduing and re-peopling it. This petition being favourably received, the subject was referred to the consideration of a committee; and the result of their deliberations was shortly after reported to the chamber, by General Defourneaux, the chairman,—a man who, from his intimate knowledge of the affairs of the colony, was considered peculiarly qualified to discharge this duty.

In reporting the decision of the committee on a subject of so much interest, Defourneaux took occasion to address the Chamber at considerable length. Having delivered an exaggerated statement of the commercial advantages which had accrued to France from the possession of St. Domingo, and afterwards pointed out the means of re-establishing the colony, he then proceeded to declare his belief, founded, he said, on his personal knowledge both of Christophe and Petion, that these chiefs would be eager to acknowledge the sovereignty of Louis: he next recommended that, in the event of that acknowledgment, the king should be entreated to grant them all the marks of honour, and all the pecuniary advantages befitting their situation and that of the colony; that, as a necessary precaution, a force should

be transported thither, along with the colonists, sufficient to put them in possession of their estates, and to secure them in it; and that his majesty should be requested to present to them laws for the interior regulation of the Island, as well with a view to the blacks already there, as to those *who should afterwards be introduced*, —for fixing the civil and political rights of men of all colours, possessed of property in the colony,—and for other objects of a pecuniary and commercial nature: and he finally suggested that, should the chiefs entertain any suspicion of the pacific intentions of his majesty, or be so rash and impolitic as to oppose his measures, he should be advised to send a sufficient number of land and sea forces to occupy the colony, and to hoist there the white flag, as the signal of a general amnesty; and that such an expedition, furnished with every thing necessary to ensure its successful issue, should be fitted out with all possible celerity.

However absurd these plans and expectations must have appeared to disinterested observers, the recovery of the colony became a favourite object, not only with the ex-colonists and their immediate connexions, but with a considerable number of the leading men of the French nation. The members of the cabinet also ultimately

entered into the same views; and in the hope of effecting an object of so much importance, they refused to accede to the proposal, made by Great Britian on the return of Louis, for an immediate abandonment of the African slave-trade, but stipulated for its continuance for five years longer; at the end of which, they promised by treaty its definitive cessation. For as the population of St. Domingo was already considerable, they would be able, they conceived, during that period, to supply the plantations with as many negroes from Africa as should be required for their entire cultivation.

In the meantime, no authentic information had yet been received by the French government respecting the state of the Island, or the disposition of the reigning chiefs; for which reason, the plan recommended by General Defourneaux being abandoned for the present, Malouet, the minister of the colonies, resolved on sending to the West Indies three commissioners, for the avowed purpose of obtaining, and transmitting to France, all the information which could be procured on these subjects. This measure, though of a preparatory nature, necessarily required much caution; and some discretion, it might be supposed, would have

been displayed in the selection of those to whom its execution should be entrusted. But the same folly was betrayed in the choice of the agents which characterized the whole scheme. The principal one, who was Dauxion Lavaysse, had been a member of the committee of public safety, at Paris, under the infamous Robespierre; and the second, de Medina, who had served in St. Domingo in the army of Toussaint, being entrusted by that general with an important post, had betrayed it to the French under Le Clerc. Two men more obnoxious to the Haytians could not, therefore, have been easily selected. These emissaries, having been instructed to repair without delay to one of the Islands nearest to St. Domingo, proceeded forthwith to England; and, in the summer of 1814, sailed from Falmouth in a packet for Jamaica.

It was impossible that these transactions should be long concealed from the Haytian chiefs; and no sooner did they gain intelligence of them, than they both concluded, that, under specious pretences and friendly appearances, an attack on the Island was contemplated. Determined on resisting the claims of France, and deeming it necessary to be cautious in listening to any proposals she might offer, they renewed

their preparations for defending their rights, and defeating the purposes of those who appeared bent on oppressing them. Petion gave immediate orders for the batteries on the coast to be repaired, the fortresses to be strengthened and secured, and the arsenals to be filled with torches,—resolved on the first appearance of an hostile force, to set fire to all the buildings in the towns, and to destroy every thing that could not be removed to the mountains. Christophe, besides making similar preparations, caused an address to be published in the royal gazette, in which he took occasion to remind his subjects of the relation in which they stood to France, and to inform them of the probable designs of that country, calling on them to stand prepared to defend their liberty and independence, with the same resolution and bravery which they had ever displayed. Nor did he hesitate to declare that, however desirous of the benefits and enjoyments of peace, the Haytians feared neither the fatigues nor the horrors of war. "Let our implacable enemies, the planters, (so concludes this address, in the language of defiance,) who have not ceased, during five and twenty years, to indulge the extravagant dream of slavery, and to pester each succeeding government with their memoirs, and projects

of conquest and subjugation, exciting only pity, disgust, and abhorrence for their criminal and wretched authors ;—let those traders in human flesh, those servile and perfidious plotters, come to execute their grand scheme of servitude and destruction. Let them place themselves at the head of their columns to direct their march ;—they will be the first victims of our vengeance, and the land of liberty will rejoice in being watered with the blood of its oppressors."

Meanwhile, the French commissioners had landed at Jamaica ; whence Lavaysse, the principal agent, addressed a letter to Petion, for the purpose of commencing the negotiation. But the proposals it contained were so vague and indistinct, that Petion could not fully understand them ; and with a view to their explanation, and for the better management of this important business, the president, in a complimentary reply, invited Lavaysse to Port-au-prince. On his arrival at that place, he was treated with the utmost respect and hospitality,—Petion having declared that 'they held the character of an envoy as sacred, even though his intentions were ever so criminal.' Lavaysse now addressed a second letter to the President, in which he formally proposed, That

the President should recognize and proclaim the authority of the French king: That he and the other leading men should form themselves into a provisional government, subject to the authority of Louis XVIII: And that they should hoist the French flag. And these proposals he concluded by stating, that in the event of a compliance with them, he was empowered, as the accredited agent of the French government, to promise the President and his colleagues the most honourable distinctions and rewards.

But neither the proposals of France, however friendly they appeared, nor the reasons employed by her agent, though vehemently urged, could shake the resolution of Petion and his colleagues to preserve entire their rights and independence. At a meeting of the authorities of the republic, convoked expressly for the purpose of taking these proposals into consideration, they were unanimously of opinion, that to accept them would be to abandon all they had gained by their exertions and sufferings during a course of several years; that even in the event of their acceding to them, no guarantee had been offered to secure the continuance of their freedom and rights; and that for aught they could see, the designs of

the ex-colonists, though covered over by specious pretences, were aimed not only against their independence, but their liberty. For these and other reasons equally satisfactory, they determined on rejecting the proposals.

On the departure of Lavaysse,—for having failed in the principal object of his mission, he immediately quitted the place,—Petion published all the official documents relating to this transaction, preceded by a dignified and eloquent address to the people and the army. In this address he informed them that France had renewed her claims to the Island; that an agent had been sent thither for the purpose of urging them, whose proposals neither their duty nor interest would allow them to accept; that an offer of pecuniary indemnity for the losses which the French colonists had sustained, had been rejected; and then reminding them of the possibility of being again attacked by their former oppressors, he thus called on them to stand prepared for resistance.—"Haytians! During a period of twenty-four years, we have fought for our rights and our liberty; and our independence is the fruit of our labours.—The right of arms has given you possession of the country. It is your unalienable property; and as its

masters, you are free to make what use you please of that which belongs to you.—Victory ever accompanies the cause of justice. Is not this telling you that it is yours, if the French venture to molest you? Should this be the event, you shall see me at your head, proud to lead you on to victory, or to perish with you."

The negotiations of Lavaysse with Christophe, to which we must now turn our attention, were of a similar nature, and conducted in a similar manner, with those he had held with Petion. Previously to the arrival of that agent at Port-au-prince, he addressed a letter to the northern chief, in which he urged him, by various arguments, to acknowledge the sovereignty of France; assured him that a compact had been signed by all the European sovereigns, to destroy all the governments which had arisen out of the French revolution; intimated his persuasion that Christophe was too wise not to prefer becoming an illustrious servant of the great monarch of France, to continuing in the precarious situation of a chief of revolted slaves; and finally threatened him that, in case of his refusing to acknowledge the sovereignty of that monarch over St. Domingo, the combined force of Europe would be brought against

him. Had any previous doubt existed in the mind of Christophe respecting the ultimate object of France; the gross mis-statements, the stupid flattery, and the ridiculous threats, contained in that letter, must have fully satisfied his mind on the subject.

But the case of Colonel de Medina, who had been sent by Lavaysse to conduct the negotiation with Christophe, placed this point in the clearest light. On the arrival of that agent at Cape François, he was recognized as a native of the Island, and a traitor to the cause of liberty; and being besides without any credentials from the French government, he was arrested and his papers seized. From an examination of these papers, which contained the secret instructions of M. Malouet, it appeared that the real object of his mission, which he pretended to be wholly pacific, was to excite discord and insurrection among the Haytians. Christophe and his ministers, therefore felt warranted, on this discovery, in treating Medina as a spy and an incendiary; and abandoning all hope of finding more favour or friendship from the cabinet of Louis, than they had experienced from that of Buonaparte, they proceeded, like Petion, to make further provision for the public safety.

That the French government, however, might be fully assured of the general feelings of the Haytians respecting its proposals, Christophe, on the receipt of the letter from Lavaysse, which was accompanied with a copy of his letter to Petion, convoked an extraordinary council of the nation, before whom he laid these documents, desiring them calmly to deliberate on their contents, and to form such resolutions as they should deem necessary for the welfare of the country. The result of their deliberations on this occasion, they delivered in an address to the king, so expressive of their patriotic energy, and so honourable to their talents and their principles, that the sentiments it contains, and the language in which they are conveyed, deserve to be recorded. After some introductory observations, they proceed to remark,—"The first overtures of peace, the first words of conciliation which are addressed to us in the name of a prince, of whom we had formed so high an opinion, are those of insult and daring outrage; proposing to men who have enjoyed their liberty for five and twenty years, to abandon their rights, that they may resume the chains of an ignominious and barbarous slavery. In proposing these horrors, the words of peace and reconciliation are at

first employed; and the poignard of treason and of perfidy is concealed under the mantle of sentiments apparently liberal, just, and humane; when on a sudden, the vile agent of this mission, changing his language, threatens to annihilate our race, and to substitute another in its stead."—Then declaiming against the dreadful alternative proposed to them of submitting to slavery or death, they demand,—"And to whom does this infamous agent dare to address himself in revealing the atrocious purposes of his government? It is," they continue, "to your majesty, the defender of liberty and independence; whose life has been devoted to the maintenance of the rights of men. To whom does he dare to speak of *master* and *slave?* To us, a people free and independent; to warriors covered with noble wounds, acquired in the field of honour; to warriors who, in a thousand combats, have made so many of those barbarous colonists bite the dust; the residue of whom, escaped from our just vengeance, now dare to speak to us of their abhorred system, which we have proscribed for ever."—"Is it," they enquire, demanding for what reasons they should accede to the proposals of France,—"Is it in return for the benefits we have received from that nation,

that we are now to resume the chains of slavery? Is it for a sovereign who is wholly unknown to us, who has never done any thing for us, and in whose name we are insulted, that we should exchange masters? Is it, in a word, to be delivered anew to torture, or to be devoured by dogs, that we are to renounce the fruit of twenty-five years of battles and of blood? What have we still in common with that people? Have we not broken every tie which could bind them to us? Why then must we be condemned to groan under their tyrannical oppression? But rather than renounce our liberty and independence, let our race be exterminated. Before France shall establish her power over Hayti, let it become one vast desert; let our towns and our houses become a prey to the flames; let each of us redouble his efforts, in resisting the purposes of our oppressors. Hayti shall rather exhibit one scene of ruins, and the affrighted spectator behold nothing but destruction, vengeance and death; and posterity shall say, in contemplating our remains, *Here once lived a people free and generous: tyrants wished to deprive them of their liberty: but they preferred ceasing to exist.*—But no: that shall not be; it is impossible; Hayti is invincible, and the justice of her cause will enable

her to triumph over every obstacle. Great Britain, that liberator of the world, will prevent such an abomination as that contemplated by our enemies. We offer our arms, our property, our lives, for the service of our country; and our motto shall still be, *Vive le roi! Vive la liberté! L'indépendence ou la mort!*"

To this address of the Haytian council, Christophe made the following reply,—"Haytians! your sentiments, your generous resolutions are honourable to you: your king shall always be deserving your confidence and regard. Our indignation is at its height!—Let us prepare to fight those tyrants, who threaten us with chains, slavery and death! The attention of the world is fixed on us: and our conduct shall confound our traducers, and justify the opinion of philanthropists concerning us. Let us rally round one point: let us form one and the same vow, that of extirminating our tyrants. King of the Haytians,—we know how to live and die as such; and rather than renounce our liberty and independence, may we be effaced from the list of nations."

The proposals of the French government, conveyed through its commissioners, were thus positively rejected by both chiefs; and its attempt to resume its ascendency over the

Island was, as might have been anticipated, wholly unsuccessful. And while on the one hand, its failure overthrew the hopes of the ex-colonists, so long and so earnestly cherished; the discovery of their designs served to increase the caution of the Haytians, and confirmed them in the resolution of holding no farther intercourse with France, till she should acknowledge and guarantee the independence of their country.[1]

[1] The preceding account of these transactions is extracted, partly from the documents furnished by De Vastey, in his *Réflexions politiques*, and partly from the History of St. Domingo, pp. 357—379.

On the second return of the Bourbons, in 1816, it was again proposed that some more effectual measures should be employed to recover this important colony. But the circumstances connected with this feeble attempt, being entirely devoid of interest, may be properly passed over in silence. Nor would this reference be made to it, where it not for the purpose of noticing the manly and eloquent *Declaration* published by the Haytian monarch on that occasion. This declaration describes at length the conduct of France towards Hayti from the time of its independence to that period, and undertakes to show, that no confidence could be placed in the proposals of her agents, that her aim was to enslave or exterminate, that it was therefore the duty of the Haytians to reject her overtures however friendly they might appear. It then proceeds to state the resolution of the Haytian government on this important matter, in the following manner;

To return to the affairs of the republic:—while both chiefs united in rejecting the overtures of France, the aversion of Petion and his party towards Christophe remained unabated. Their separation from him, in the first instance, was partly occasioned by representations of his violence and cruelty; and to justify their

"For these reasons, we have declared, and we still solemnly declare, that we will not treat with the French government, except on the footing of one sovereign power with another; That we will enter into no negotiation with that government, which does not proceed on its admission of the independence of Hayti: That we will conclude no definitive treaty with it, without having previously obtained the good offices of some great maritime power, by whom the faith of the French cabinet shall be guaranteed: That no overtures or communications which may be made by the government of France to that of Hayti shall be received by us, unless drawn up according to the form and usage of diplomatic communications: And finally that the French flag shall not be admitted into any port of the kingdom, nor any individual of that nation enter our territories, till the independence of Hayti be definitively acknowledged by the government of France.—We further declare and protest that, whatever be the threats of the French to intimidate us, whatever their undertakings in order to subdue us, by whatever mode of attack they propose to accomplish their ends, nothing shall for a single moment shake our resolution. And should the whole world unite in exterminating us, the last of the Haytians will submit to his hard fate, rather than abandon his freedom and independence."

continued opposition to his authority, the consequences of which were plainly perceived and lamented, they still circulated the most exaggerated accounts of his avarice and tyranny. They described him as being a thorough despot. 'Tyrant, usurper, savage,' —were the terms they employed to denote their opinion of his character and government. They affected to pity those who had submitted to his sway, and charged them with egregious folly for supporting his pretensions. These feelings were universally prevalent among the republican party; and it was evident that a favourable opportunity only was wanting, to deprive him of his possessions and to put an end to his life. Petion himself sincerely believed that the overthrow of his rival was an event to be desired next to the acknowledgment of the independence of Hayti by France; and contemplated it as a circumstance, than which nothing could contribute more effectually to the strength and prosperity of the Island. For this reason, he continually endeavoured to ascertain the state of Christophe's government, and the sentiments of his party; and held himself in readiness to invade his territories the moment he thought hostilities might be renewed with success.

But Petion did not live to witness the accomplishment of his wishes. He had long lamented the little improvement which had taken place among his people; and while he felt himself unable to effect a greater change, he doubted the efficacy of the existing laws to produce it. Dissatisfied with the result of his proceedings, and beholding with deep concern the resistance made by his people to many of his regulations, he at length concluded that they were weary of his government, and desirous of electing another in his stead:—a conclusion, however, for which there appeared not the slightest foundation. For their fidelity to his cause remained unshaken, and their attachment to his person unaltered. But neither the arguments of his colleagues and friends, nor the continued expressions of regard from the people, could convince him of his error. The unfavourable impression gathered strength daily, and at length so powerfully affected him, as to render him incapable of attending to public affairs. Continually haunted by the suspicion of a general disaffection, he construed every trifling event into a plot against his government, and feared that every one about him was conspiring to take away his life. He then grew melancholy,

—objected to receive his usual visitors,—denied admission even to some of his confidential friends,—neglected his appearance,—and finally refused to take his ordinary food.

It was soon evident that he laboured under some internal disease, which threatened to be fatal; and which, shortly after its first indications, precluded all hopes of his recovery. When this became known to the people, the concern it excited among them cannot be easily conceived. They felt that they were about to be deprived of one who had long devoted himself to their welfare,—of one who had ever shown a readiness to sacrifice his ease, his fortune, and even his life, for their good; and their grief corresponded with this conviction. Various means were resorted to, in order to revive his spirits and to prolong his life, but in vain; and he at last fell a victim, partly to disease and partly to melancholy;[1] dying in the belief of his people's ingratitude, while he was, in truth, the object of their fervent attachment.

The moment his death was made known to the people, their grief and lamentations were indescribable. They had lost, they said, their

[1] May 1818.

defender, their protector, their father; for he who had led them forth in defence of liberty, who had so bravely exerted himself in that noble cause, and since their independence had lived only to promote their welfare, was now no more! For some time, there was a cessation of all public business; every countenance bore the expression of heart-felt sorrow; and Port-au-prince exhibited,—what perhaps it had never done before,—every proof of unaffected grief for a meritorious and popular leader. His funeral was celebrated with great pomp, and his body was conducted to the grave amidst the tears and regrets of thousands. The most forcible expressions their language could furnish, were employed to give vent to the violence of their feelings. The men proclaimed aloud his virtues, as though he had been more than mortal; and poured forth their lamentations, as if deprived of the only individual capable of presiding over their affairs. The women, according to their custom on the loss of their dearest friends, remonstrated with the Virgin Mary for not having prolonged his life; and tearing their hair, and lifting their hands to heaven, deplored in the most pathetic terms, the death of their protector and friend. It was

long ere the grief of the Haytians for the loss of this popular leader abated; his memory, on many accounts deservedly dear, is warmly cherished among them; and his name, associated as it is with the most eventful periods of their history, will doubtless descend with honour to their remotest posterity. In conformity to his last wishes, and with the unanimous consent of the people, General Boyer, his confidential friend and assistant, was elected and proclaimed his successor.

XIV.

DECLINE OF CHRISTOPHE'S POPULARITY:—HIS DEATH AND CHARACTER:—UNION OF BOTH PARTIES UNDER BOYER:—CONCLUSION.

THE death of Petion, and the succession of Boyer, excited less interest among Christophe and his party, than the importance of these circumstances appeared calculated to produce. The Haytian monarch, indeed, still found the affairs of his own kingdom sufficient to occupy his attention; and as the republican party refrained from interfering with his government, he was equally disposed to leave them in quiet possession of their territory. He had now reigned during a period of nine years.[1] This was a period, indeed, barren of events, but it had furnished him with incessant occupation; and to have judged from external appearances, it might be concluded that a solid foundation had been laid for the permanence

[1] From 1811 to 1820.

of his authority, and the improvement of his dominions.

Nor could he forbear indulging great self-satisfaction, at the recollection of his exertions in defence of liberty, and of his subsequent popularity and advancement. During the latter part of his reign, he sometimes gathered his family and favourite officers around him; and waving for the time the etiquette and ceremony he was accustomed to require, he would relate to them, with evident pleasure, such circumstances of his life as appear to have made the deepest impression on his mind. On these occasions, said a gentleman who was sometimes admitted to the select party, he recounted the battles in which he had engaged in the early part of his career; he enumerated his exploits, his dangers and his escapes; and gloried in his achievements, both as they related to the good of his country, and to his own success. Nor could any thing be more interesting, in its kind, than to hear from the negro hero an account of his adventures; a description of the principal characters who, during a period of thirty years, had risen up among the Haytians; and an enumeration of the more important circumstances which contributed to their final

emancipation, and his own elevation to the throne.

But so far was Christophe from being at ease, amidst this appearance of peace and prosperity, that he now lived in continual suspicion of plots against his life. He no longer trusted to the honour or sincerity of his officers; and fearful lest they should form and execute any treacherous design, either against his person or authority, he carefully watched all their movements, and took every precaution for his safety. With this view, he defended his palaces with all possible care. Whenever he had occasion to undertake a journey, or even a ride for exercise, besides being attended by his body guard, in whom alone he appeared to confide, he was himself always armed with loaded pistols. Nor would he appear in public so frequently as he had been accustomed to do in the early part of his reign; but either shut himself up in his palace at Cape François, where he admitted to his presence none but his favourites; or lived in retirement at Sans Souci, the place he preferred to all others.

But the fears of Christophe, unlike those of Petion, were not entirely groundless. Numerous circumstances had conspired to diminish his popularity, and to prepare the way for his

downfall; and none more so than the manner in which he had for a considerable time exercised his authority. His government which, during the first years of his reign, was equally mild and judicious, had gradually grown so intolerant, as to become insupportable to a people, whose fears the most distant approach of tyranny was sufficient to alarm. His more recent regulations were, in various instances, excessively severe, partaking more of the nature of despotism, than of a mild and liberal government; many, formed without necessity, served only to evince his power, without answering any useful purpose; and all were enforced with a degree of rigour which corresponded with the increasing intolerance of his character and proceedings.

The conduct of Christophe towards his nobles and principal officers, was equally injurious to his popularity. He no longer consulted them with that openness and candour which he manifested in the early part of his reign; he even deprived them, as far as he was able, of the influence they possessed over the people; and often rejected their advice, when it was no less necessary to his own interest than to theirs. Whether he consulted with them on matters directly relating to the prosperity of the state,

or on others of less importance, he asserted his own opinions so positively, and insisted on their adoption with so much pertinacity, that the only alternative left them was, to submit quietly to his decisions, or risk the loss of their rank and emoluments. While his arbitrary proceedings in the government created general dissatisfaction among his officers, his capricious treatment of them, as individuals, destroyed their remaining attachment. Sometimes for the most trivial offences, at others for no visible cause whatever, he degraded them from their rank, and placed in their stead men neither deserving promotion, nor capable of discharging the duties which devolved on them. At the same time, his possession of unlimited power, had rendered him suspicious, and jealous of merit; anxious to adopt measures rather for the security of his person and authority, than for the welfare of his subjects; and disposed to interpret the most trifling actions into treason or rebellion, and to punish them with equal severity and injustice. By these proceedings, he gradually lost the affections and confidence both of his officers and the people, till he had now become as much the object of their dread, as he had formerly been of their admiration.

Further than this, Christophe had long ceased

to restrain himself from those sudden bursts of passion to which his temper was naturally subject; and the following instance of his violence, which occurred about the middle of his reign, may serve as a specimen of the change which the possession of sovereign power had gradually wrought in his conduct. The mulatto women who resided at Cape François, having always enjoyed their freedom, thought themselves on that account superior to the rest of the population; and they consequently hoped to have been exempted from many of the restraints imposed by Christophe on the blacks. When they found that no difference was made, but that the same law was binding on all, without respect to colour or rank, they considered themselves treated with injustice and cruelty; and from secretly murmuring at the conduct of their chief, at length grew openly disaffected. In order therefore to be delivered from what they unjustly considered oppression, they adopted the following expedient.

In the absence of Christophe from the Cape, a party of them repaired to the church at that place, to intreat the favour and interference of the Virgin Mary; and kneeling before her image, which they had previously adorned in

the most fantastic manner, they represented to her that their chief, by having denied them their privileges and encroached on their rights, was unjust, cruel, and villanous, and therefore deserving her signal displeasure and vengeance. They then earnestly prayed that she would prevent his return to the Cape, lest he should aggravate their present grievances; that he might be cut off by some dreadful death,—for that none could be too dreadful for him to suffer; and that another and a better ruler might be given them, under whose government they might be prosperous and happy. All this they performed in the presence of the priest and others; and while passing the street, on their return from the church, they continued their petitions, praying that their heaviest curses might fall on their oppressor.

Whether their complaints were justly founded or not, they soon perceived that their prayers were unavailing; for shortly after the performance of this extraordinary ceremony, Christophe unexpectedly returned to the capital. Nor was it long before he received intelligence of their conduct. For the priest, the very man who should have exerted himself to befriend them, willing to convince his patron how deeply interested he felt in his safety,

hastened without delay to the palace, and related to him the transaction, with every aggravating circumstance that attended it. The effect which this intelligence produced on Christophe may be easily inferred from his conduct. He flew into so violent a rage, that the priest began to fear lest he should share in the vengeance which he had provoked against others. It seemed as though the demon of cruelty, which had possessed Dessalines, had now taken possession of his successor. And when his rage had partially subsided, his first act was to issue a mandate, ordering the whole party to be put to instant death.

This measure produced among all classes a sensation corresponding to its injustice and tyranny. The majority of the officers, ignorant of the particulars of the case, and unable on this account to judge to what extent these unfortunate women were guilty, positively refused to take any part in its execution. For wherefore should they be hastily, and perhaps undeservedly consigned over to destruction? The alarm and terror of the inhabitants were still greater than the surprize of the soldiers. Although they well knew the conduct of the women, and were prepared to expect that it would be speedily punished, they had never

dreaded a sentence so terrible; and since it was uncertain who had been named as the guilty, all began to entertain the most serious fears for their safety. But who can conceive the horrors of the wretched victims of rage and cruelty, on learning their dreadful fate! Let the imagination, if it be able, picture the distressing scene..... But neither the expostulations and entreaties of his officers, nor the alarm of the people, could prevail on Christophe to countermand the bloody decree; and these helpless women were sought out and discovered by a party of soldiers, torn from their friends by violence, driven to a spot at a short distance; and before the rage of the cruel and impolitic chief had abated, they had fallen victims to the stroke of the executioner. A grassy mound, near the spot where they were beheaded, marks the place into which they were thrown, serving for their common grave.

The tyranny and cruelty of Christophe in this affair are beyond all question; and the effects which followed were such as he might, had he allowed himself time to consider, have easily forseen. The indignation excited among all classes of his subjects powerfully alarmed his fears; and though he endeavoured to extenuate his conduct, and was ever desirous

of atoning for his error, yet no subsequent act of condescension or humanity could restore him to their confidence and attachment. To his leading men, by whose influence partly he had been raised to the throne, the transaction served as a proof of his rashness and barbarity; and those who till this time had been sincerely attached to his cause, now saw that, whatever might be his abilities, they could no longer rely on his temper. In short, this dreadful massacre, in connexion with other proceedings equally unpopular, if not equally tyrannical, by producing a mutual mistrust between him and his subjects, rendered the subsequent part of his reign a contrast to that which preceded; and while he, in consequence, grew more absolute and despotic, they became more cautious in watching his proceedings, and more disposed to resist his authority. Under such circumstances, it was obvious that he could not long retain his power, nor escape the plots which the more disaffected of his nobles might form against him.

But it must not be concealed that the character of these men contributed as much to the downfall of Christophe, as the nature of his government during his latter years. Unsettled in their political opinions, unsteady in their

resolutions, and guided more by caprice than by reason, they felt it impossible to rest long satisfied with any one chief, whatever his qualifications to stand at the head of affairs, or with any mode of government, however well adapted to the people. Their struggles in the cause of liberty, and even their success and promotion, tended also to enkindle every latent spark of ambition, and instead of satisfying their wishes, prompted them to aspire after still greater honour and influence. Many of the mulattoes especially, envied the success of Christophe, and from the beginning submitted to his authority with a reluctance which they could not always conceal. They felt and cherished a secret dissatisfaction, that all their efforts had ended in their being placed on an equality with blacks, and compelled, by existing circumstances, to submit to the government of a negro. At the same time, some of them, whom he regarded with suspicion, and had threatened to degrade, conceived such a dislike towards him as no concession on his part could overcome; and by frequently reminding their fellow-officers that they no longer possessed the authority to which they were entitled, nor the people the liberty for which they had bravely contended, they

increased the discontent of all parties, and prepared the way for a general revolt. And whether the mulattoes, with the negro nobles whom they had gained over to their party, had concerted any regular plan to effect the overthrow of this chief, or whether they determined to be guided, in their measures, by such favourable circumstances as might occur, it was evident that they only awaited a convenient opportunity for carrying their design into execution.

Such was the state of affairs between Christophe and his subjects, when the following circumstance took place. While he was celebrating the queen's fête at one of his palaces named *Belle-vue*, which was at a considerable distance from the Cape, he was seized with a fit of apoplexy, so alarming in its symptoms that it was at first feared it would be impossible for him to recover. His physician, whom he admitted into his confidence, and frequently invited to accompany him in his excursions, was fortunately present on this occasion; who, after immediate and copious bleeding, began to hope that his royal patient might ultimately revive. The whole of the following month, however, he was confined to his room, during which he experienced

frequent though less violent attacks, and continued so weak as to be incapable of the least exertion. At the end of that period, it was thought necessary to remove him to his palace at Sans Souci, a change which was attended with considerable difficulty and danger.

In the meantime, the disaffected nobles and officers, conceiving this opportunity the most favourable to their projects, held frequent consultations together, for the purpose of determining by what method they might put an end to the present government, and establish another on a more liberal basis. While this matter was in agitation, another circumstance occurred, by which the less resolute members of the faction were prevailed on to unite in the measures of their more violent companions, and the whole party were led to resolve unanimously on an immediate declaration of their designs. About a week after Christophe was removed to Sans Souci, the troops stationed at St. Marc's, a town on the western coast, mutinied against their officers; and in a moment of rage, excited by the impolitic conduct of the latter, put two of their number to death, and compelled the remainder to escape for their lives. On intelligence of this event being communicated to Christophe,—for he being

now somewhat recovered, it was deemed necessary to inform him of the matter,—he appeared for a moment unusually agitated, as though unable to determine what directions to give on the occasion. But he at length despatched a messenger to the Cape, with orders for the garrison at that place to march without delay to St. Marc's; and on their arrival there, to seize and put to death the ring-leaders of the mutiny, and to confine the rest in prison till further orders should be given respecting them.

This whole circumstance could not have occurred at a moment more unfortunate for Christophe, and more favourable to the designs of the nobles. On the arrival of the messenger with these orders to the Cape, one of the more powerful barons, addressing his associates, said, "What commands are these? Who has given him the right of condemning men to death, without ascertaining the nature and extent of their crime? And why shall we go, at his command, and cut the throats of our brethren? Let us rather go straight to Sans Souci, and cut off the fellow's head: we shall then be delivered from tyranny, and shall have no more mutinies among the soldiers." "If you are disposed that way," answered the duke de

Marmalade, " I am ready to join you; and we had better lose no time in carrying the design into effect. What say you?" added he, addressing the other officers, " shall we collect the troops, and proceed to his palace? He has nothing but his own guard to defend him." And they unanimously assented to the proposal.

The troops at Cape François were in consequence immediately called out, and considerable sums of money distributed among them. This being done, they were informed that the king had ordered the garrison at St. Marc's to be put to death for a very trivial offence; and were reminded that, since he was become thus capricious and tyrannical, it was impossible to say how soon they also might feel the dire effects of his despotism. When therefore it was suggested to them, that the only way to rescue their fellow-soldiers from instant destruction, and to deliver themselves from the hands of a tyrant, was to proceed forthwith to his palace and despatch him, they at once shouted their assent to the measure, and demanded to be led forward to Sans Souci. Matters being thus arranged, the whole garrison, on the following morning, accompanied by all the inhabitants of the town capable of bearing arms, marched to *Haut-*

de-Cap, which lay on the road to the palace; and as the king's guard, whose opposition they expected, was a numerous and powerful body, they encamped on this spot, till additional troops from other parts of the Island should join them.

When news of this formidable revolt reached the ears of Christophe, so unexpected was it on his part, and so great was his agitation in consequence, that his usual firmness and resolution at first wholly forsook him. But he soon recovered from the momentary shock, and gave his orders with his accustomed calmness; he directed the entrances to his palace to be secured, the cannon to be arranged on different parts of the mountain, and his guard to stand in readiness to support him; and by every other measure of caution and defence which the nature of the case would allow, he prepared for the storm already gathering thick around him, and awaited its terrors with equal resolution and composure. Having made these arrangements, he summoned the officers of his guard; and addressing them individually, he called on them, by all that was honourable and loyal, to defend him, the master of their fortunes, with the same zeal and bravery as they had formerly de-

fended their rights. He then gave each of them handsome presents, and furnished them with a large sum of money to be distributed among the men; and he received from them, in return, their most solemn assurances to stand by him to the last, and to defend his person and authority "*jusqu'à la mort.*"

But Christophe's race was run. His principal adherents had deserted him; men whom he considered indebted to him for their distinction, were now risen in arms against him; and last of all, his guards, in violation of their promised fidelity, joined the forces of the faction, and thus abandoned him to his fate. The moment he heard that they on whom alone he relied for support, had also deserted his cause, he desired those in his presence to withdraw; and fearing if he should fall into the hands of the factious leaders, he would be devoted to an ignominious death, he seized one of the pistols with which he was always provided, and instantly shot himself through the head.[1]

Such was the end of this distinguished negro; a chief whose life exhibits a series of remarkable changes, whose character presents a singular diversity of light and shade, and whose

[1] October 1820.

reign was distinguished, especially in its effects, from that of all his predecessors. In the first period of his life we behold him a slave, chained by oppression, tortured by cruelty, exhausted by labour and suffering, without hope of deliverance or relief. He is then seen resolutely contending for his rights, amidst scenes of havoc and bloodshed, a leader in the cause of freedom and independence. Afterwards he is viewed seated at the head of his people; surrounded with the appendages, and exercising the prerogatives, of royalty; revered by his subjects, and labouring for their improvement. Last of all, we behold him becoming himself the oppressor and tyrant, abandoned in consequence by his principal adherents, and seeking a refuge from their fury in self-destruction. His early distinction while a soldier, and his subsequent authority as king, he acquired by his talents and exertions alone. During the struggle for liberty, he was renowned for his superior skill in military affairs. To his courage, his enemies yielded their unequivocal testimony. Amidst difficulties and dangers, his firmness remained unshaken. And in whatever enterprize he engaged, his perseverance, surmounting all obstacles, generally ensured him success. The history of his reign

furnishes unquestionable proofs, that he possessed natural abilities of no common order. In the measures he pursued for the defence of his dominions, and the welfare of his people, may be perceived a degree of wisdom and policy which, as it would be little expected from a negro, cannot fail to excite admiration. Those which provided for the administration of justice, the education of youth, and the improvement of agriculture and commerce, reflect honour on his character, both as a ruler and a patriot. Had all these measures originated with himself, without the advice of his ministers, it might be fairly inferred that Christophe, though a negro and once a slave, wanted education only, and a wider field for the exercise of his talents, to have rendered him one of the first monarchs of modern times. But if his talents were great, his faults were numerous and glaring. His love of wealth could be exceeded only by his love of pomp and display. The violence of his temper could not always be checked, even by considerations of policy. His cruelty increased, as his ambitious views extended. And the unlimited power which he at length acquired, rendered him, as it has done many others, jealous, capricious, and tyrannical. The character of the people re-

quired firmness, decision, and perhaps occasional severity, in the ruler. But the treatment of his partisans was impolitic and ungrateful; his acts of cruelty and oppression admit of no extenuation; and though he was once numbered among the heroes of his country, and the benefactors of his race; the despotism of the latter part of his reign, unfortunately for his fame, has already ranked him among tyrants.

The party who conspired against Christophe, having thus accomplished their principal object, appeared at first desirous of completing their designs, without practising any further violence. They therefore immediately despatched a messenger to the queen and her daughters, who had fled to the citadel, for the purpose of conveying to them assurances of protection and safety. For from women so easily alarmed at the approach of danger, and destitute of the means of opposition, they thought they had nothing to fear. But there were some who had refused to act in concert with them, whose destruction they considered necessary to the accomplishment of their future projects. The close alliance of these men with the late king, their endeavours to support his cause, and their opposition to the measures

which effected his overthrow, were deemed so many reasons for their sharing in his fate. The most distinguished of them was the Prince Royal, who having, after the death of his father, endeavoured in vain to conceal himself till he should find some way of escape, was at length prevailed upon, by the difficulties which embarrased him, to surrender himself into the hands of the faction. He was still young, being only in his seventeenth year, and was held in great estimation by a part of the army, whose attachment continued notwithstanding his misfortunes. But from the possibility that he might assert his claims to the government, or take vengeance on the enemies of his father, it was thought safer to risk the discontent of the soldiers, than his future pretensions and intrigues; and about ten days after his surrender, he was put to death. About the same time ten others, more or less distinguished, fell victims, some to their adherence to the cause of Christophe, and the rest to private revenge.

With Christophe ended what had been denominated the Haytian monarchy. But those who had so successfully conspired against him, were far from entertaining an intention of uniting with the republic, and of thus com-

bining the strength of the Island, and their efforts to promote its improvement. This would have been fatal to the ambitious views by which many of them had been actuated. For although the errors of their late chief may have justified their violence; his misconduct was not their only motive for effecting his ruin. They hoped to profit by his overthrow, and to acquire greater wealth and influence than the system of government pursued by him permitted them to possess. Hence to offer submission to Boyer, the President of the republic, whose claims they still rejected, would be, they thought, to defeat by their folly, the accomplishment of an object for which they had already risked their fortunes and lives.

Their original determination therefore was, that as the northern and southern districts of the Island had been governed by different chiefs for several years, they should still continue under separate governments. But to form a new constitution so as to favour their secret designs, and to satisfy the demands of the people,—and at the same time to restore that order and tranquillity among them which the late occurrences had interrupted, was a work which required their united skill and diligence. They first proposed to select from

among themselves one who should be invested with temporary authority over the rest, and afterwards to remodel the government at their leisure, adapting it as much as possible to their own views and the state of the population. Of those nominated to fill that office, *Romaine* was finally chosen. This man, who was known, under Christophe, by the pompous titles of *Prince of Limbé, prince of the kingdom, and grand marshal of Hayti*, had been one of the most active in planning and conducting the recent transactions, and the most violent in his rage against the late king and the few who had been faithful to his cause. He at first promised to fill the station to which his comrades had raised him, with credit to himself and advantage to the people. But he was not wise enough to conceal his ambition, nor to conduct his schemes with secrecy; for he was at length detected in endeavouring to gain the suffrages of the soldiers, and to prevail on them to proclaim him king. His degradation was the immediate consequence of this discovery.

During the period in which Romaine presided over the affairs of the ruling party, his misconduct, with their frequent contentions, and the little progress they had made in settling a new order of things, sufficiently convinced

them that it was more easy to overthrow one government, than to frame and establish another; and that however little it cost them to effect the ruin of their late chief, it would be difficult to select another possessing equal abilities, and free from the vices which they had laid to his charge.—In the meantime, Boyer had been making preparations to unite the northern districts of the Island to his own territories;—an object which had always appeared to him as a most desirable one, and which he thought might now be accomplished with comparative ease. Previously however to his engaging in that enterprize, the party at Cape François had changed their original purpose; for finding that all their efforts to restore union among themselves, and order among the people, were in vain, they determined at length to abandon their ambitious projects, and to join the republic. Boyer, on receiving proposals to this effect, accompanied with conditions against which no objection could be urged, instantly proceeded to the Cape, and entering it at the head of 20,000 men, was immediately proclaimed the sole authorized chief of Hayti.[1]

[1] The period during which these transactions occurred, may be naturally supposed to have been a season of great

Since the union of both parties into one republic, several circumstances have occurred which have essentially contributed to the prosperity of Hayti; among which, none is more important than the acknowledgment of its independence by France. It appeared for a long time a matter of great uncertainty, whether the difficulty of re-conquering the Island,

anxiety to the foreign residents. When they first heard that a design had been formed to cut off Christophe, and that the army had been gained over by the party who opposed him, they all became seriously alarmed for their safety; and fearing a renewal of those massacres of which Cape François had once been the scene, they awaited the event of the conspiracy with inexpressible dread. On the death of Christophe also, the greater part of the army returned to the Cape; and being no longer subject to their accustomed discipline, it was impossible to conjecture to what excesses they might be driven. For these reasons, many stood armed to protect themselves, kept strict watch over their property, and anxiously waited for an opportunity of escaping from a place where they considered themselves in imminent and continual danger. But to the credit of the Haytians, it must be recorded, that during these proceedings, the whites experienced not the least molestation. The principal officers sent them the strongest assurances of protection and safety. Even by the soldiers, whose conduct was in many instances of a most riotous nature, and whose violence it was difficult to restrain, they were treated with accustomed respect; and amidst the utmost confusion, they suffered no other inconvenience than that of a temporary suspension of their business.

or the proposals of its chiefs to compensate the ex-colonists for their losses, would ever induce the government of that country to relinquish her claims to a colony so extensive and valuable. It appeared equally difficult to fix on a plan for the accomplishment of this object, which should be just and honourable in itself, and agreeable to the views of parties whose pretensions were so directly at variance. But what the preceding chiefs, either from its apparent difficulty, or from their peculiar circumstances, were withheld from attempting, Boyer has happily succeeded in effecting; and France has at length formally recognized the independence of Hayti. In whatever light this circumstance be viewed, it is unquestionably the most important that has occurred for the welfare of the Haytians, since they first obtained their freedom. It will tend to give confidence to their rulers, and stability to their government; and serve to confirm that love of liberty and independence which has hitherto distinguished their character. It will be the means of promoting their agriculture, extending their commerce, increasing their wealth and influence, and of introducing among them more efficient plans for the communication of knowledge, than any which could have been pre-

viously established. And thus it may be regarded as an event sufficiently important to constitute another epoch in the history of this interesting people.

In reviewing that portion of their history to which these sketches relate,—and this is all that remains to be done,—the fate of their chiefs, the changes which have taken place in their government, and above all, the actual progress they have made in civilization, cannot fail to arrest our attention.—Toussaint L'Ouverture, who, being distinguished alike for his justice and integrity, and for his talents as a soldier and a statesman, was therefore pre-eminently qualified to stand at the head of a liberated body of negroes; was nevertheless seized through treachery, carried to France as a prisoner, and after suffering numerous indignities, was either murdered, or died through barbarous treatment, in a dungeon. Dessalines, a man as infamous for his savage cruelty, as he was remarkable for his hatred of the French, and his vigorous and successful exertions in the cause of negro freedom, was either assassinated by his own officers, or shot in their presence by a common soldier. Petion, amiable, generous, and devoted to the welfare

of his people, starved himself to death on account of their supposed ingratitude. And finally, Christophe, by no means the least distinguished of the Haytian chiefs,—when those who had been the companions of his fortunes, and had shared in his success, conspired against him,—to avoid a cruel and dishonourable death, fell by his own hands.

Such has been the fate of the chiefs of Hayti. And the changes which it has undergone with regard to its government are not less remarkable. From the time that the English withdrew their troops from the Island, till the attempt of France to re-enslave the negroes, the administration of its affairs was confided to the civil and military chief appointed by the mother-country, to whose authority he was responsible for his conduct. Under the sanguinary leader who succeeded him, after the French had abandoned the colony, its government, though professedly founded on the principles of liberty and equality, was in reality the despotism of a capricious tyrant, whose will was the only law, while death was the almost invariable punishment for its violation. But a despotic government was peculiarly ill-adapted to the opinions and circumstances of the Haytians; and the successors of that

chief, understanding more intimately the negro character, and more wisely, consulting their own interest, adopted, the one a republican form, and the other, that of a limited monarchy. By another change, the latter has been abolished, and both parts are now united into one republic. Thus within a period of thirty years, has Hayti made trial of almost every mode of government.

But these are changes to which all infant states are more or less subject; and they no more necessarily imply a repetition of scenes of confusion and anarchy, than the swelling of the ocean, after the storm has passed away, threatens a renewal of the tempest. For, in truth, the Haytians, amidst all the reverses they have experienced subsequently to their emancipation, have been, and continue to be, in a condition, to which, in point of rank and enjoyment, that of slaves can bear no comparison. Instead of being bound in chains, reduced by hardship and suffering to the lowest degradation, deprived of their rights as men, and treated in most respects as though a species of brutes, subject to the caprices of petty tyrants, by whom they were destined to perpetual bondage; their spirits broken, their energies subdued, their character degraded and

fallen,—the inhabitants of Hayti are now free and prosperous and happy. If liberty is a treasure next in value to existence itself,—if

> " 'Tis liberty alone that gives the flower
> Of fleeting life, its lustre and perfume,"

of that treasure are the Haytians in full and secure possession. At their head have been placed men who, however numerous their errors or melancholy their fate, were endowed by nature with distinguished talents; who, while they were thus qualified to preside over a limited tract of country, inhabited by a scanty population but partly civilized, would, but for the disadvantages of their earlier years, have been fitted to act a conspicuous part in the affairs of the most flourishing nations. Their present chief has shown himself equal, in abilities, to the most renowned of his predecessors; and has fully evinced, by the moderation of his political principles, by the prudence of his measures, and by his unwearied endeavours to advance the interests of the republic, that the choice of the people, by whom he was raised to the Presidentship, has fallen on one not unworthy of that distinguished situation. If their government be not, in all respects, the best adapted to their character, they conceive it

to possess peculiar advantages; and being on that account anxious for its continuance, they have employed such means as appeared necessary to its stability. Though their standing army has seen little of active service, and its discipline has suffered a temporary relaxation, it is sufficiently powerful to maintain the freedom and independence of their country, against any force by which it may be hereafter assailed. The institutions they have formed with a view to public instruction, are admirably adapted to their state; and being liberally supported, and in full operation, by gradually opening to them the treasures of knowledge, are thus conferring on them incalculable benefits. Free from civil broils, and no longer in dread of foreign foes, they are availing themselves of the opportunities which a period of tranquillity affords them, for establishing such regulations as shall render them hereafter a powerful, wealthy, and intelligent people. Their population has been long and rapidly increasing. Their system of agriculture is improving, and with it, the produce of the Island. And they have already formed commercial relations, no less important to their future peace and security, than to the increase of their wealth and influence. Thus have the

Haytians fully emerged from a condition, the lowest in the scale of humanity, and destructive of all that dignifies and adorns it. In possession of their liberty, they have learnt by experience to estimate its value, and are endeavouring to improve its advantages. And by means peculiarly suited to their condition, with which their resources happily supply them, they are gradually advancing towards a state of perfect civilization and refinement.

THE END.

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